BENGAL'S CONTRIBUTION TO ISLAMIC STUDIES DURING THE 18TH CENTURY

ABSTRACT

THESIS
SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF
Doctor of Philosophy
IN
ISLAMIC STUDIES

BY
SHABNAM BEGUM

UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF
PROF. M. SALIM KIDWAI

T 4537

DEPARTMENT OF ISLAMIC STUDIES
ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY
ALIGARH (INDIA)
1994

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ABSTRACT

In the long annals of the history of Bengal the eighteenth century occupies a unique position. In this century Muslim regime came to an end and British dominion was firmly established in Bengal. Many scholars have done commendable research on various aspects and brought out many valuable works on this century. But aspects like Contribution of Bengal to Islamic Studies during eighteenth century have not been properly explored. The purpose of this study is to find out the nature and roots of Islamic learning in Bengal, the institutions and scholars of Bengal.

The thesis has been divided into five chapters and an Introduction and a Conclusion. The chapters are as given below :-

Chapter I

Section I - Early Muslim Contact with Bengal.

Section II - Socio-political Contact of Muslims with Bengal.

Chapter II - Religious Institutions of Bengal in the eighteenth century.

Chapter III- The Sufis of the eighteenth century.

Chapter IV - Arabic and Persian Literature in Bengal during eighteenth century.

Chapter V - Contribution of Muslims to Bengali Literature during eighteenth century.

A brief note on the whole thesis is presented here.

(This land was known to the Arabs much before the rise of Islam there. Their traders first came here with their commodities, later on, after the emergence of Islam there, preachers came here with the message of Islam. Later on, the land was conquered by a muslim hero, Ikhtiyar ud-Din and since then the land was under Muslim rules for more than one hundred years. This long period can be broadly divided into two - pre-Mughal and Mughal period. The pre-Mughal period was much longer covering about four hundred years. During this period, Bengal was governed mostly by independent sultans. In the Mughal period, which was about hundred years, Bengal was ruled as a province by viceroys appointed by the Mughal Emperors.) Most of the period of the Sultanate witnessed peace and tranquility which resulted in progress in many respects. There was political stability in the early part of the eightheenth century but the middle of the eighteenth century was a period of political instability and transition caused by the gradual fall of Mughal Empire and the rise of the British era. Though it greatly impaired the progress of the Muslim particulary but the later's contribution towards the cause of Islam was not insignificant.

The Muslim rulers championed the cause of Islam in their policies and activities. They would consider it their pious duty to help Islam in every possible way. So they established many Mosques and Madrasahs. They provided liberal grants and donations to these institutions and patronized the Shaikhs and the Ulemas with a view to spreading and promoting Islam. These endeavours started from the very beginning of the Muslim reign and continued even after the end of the Muslim rule in the eighteenth century.

Some of the prominent religious institutions constructed by the rulers are mentioned below.

Kartalab Khan Mosque at Dhaka was founded by Murshid Quli Khan in 1700-4 A.D. He constructed another mosque and Madrasah at Murshidabad known as Katra Madrasah in 1723 A.D. Lalbagh Shahi Mosque situated at Dhaka was constructed by Farrukh Siyar, Deputy viceroy of Bengal in 1703-1706 A.D. Another mosque named Phuti Mosque was built by Sarfaraz Khan at Kumrapur, Murshidabad. Motijhil Madrasah was built by Nawab Nawazish Khan, nephew and son-in-law of Nawab Alivardi Khan at Motijhil area (Murshidabad) in 1751 A.D.

In addition to the Muslim rulers, many rich and benevolent Muslims built Mosques, Madrasahs, Maktabs at various times. Some of these are mentioned below.

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Mosque of Inchalabazar was founded by Sayyid Tahir in 1703 A.D. in the district of Burdwan. Khan Muhammad Mirdha mosque was founded near Lalbagh Fort in 1706 A.D. by one Khan Muhammad Mirdha, who was an architect. The wife of Khanjani established one mosque named Armanitala mosque on Sarat Chandra Chakravarti road in 1735 A.D. Sayyid Qasim established one mosque at Baliaghata, Murshidabad in 1742-43 A.D. Mahinagar Mosque near Murshidabad was founded by Wasil Muhammad in 1759-60. Buhar Madrasah was established by Munshi Sadr ud-Din at Buhar in 1775. Wali Khan built a mosque near Chittagang Medical College in 1790 A.D. Phudan Mosque was founded at English Bagar, Malda by one Phundan in 1794 A.D. In 1797 A.D. one mosque was built by Fakir Talib near Berhampore in Murshidabad. This mosque is known as Mosque Gharbi.

The English also took interest in uplifting educational status of the Muslims of Bengal. With this intention Calcutta Madrasah was founded by Warren Hastings, the then Governor-general of Bengal in 1780 A.D.

Though Islam didn't encourage asceticism and mysticism, in course of time there came into being a class of mysticism known a Sufi. They were divided into different groups. Each group was named after its founder- the Qaderiyah, the

Chishtiyah, the Naqsbandiyah etc. Their arrival into Bengal occured much before the advent of Muslim rulers. They played a major role in propagating Islam and in proselytization. Most of the sufis were highly educated and well-versed in Quran and Hadith and would teach people on the light of Sharia. In this connection the name of the following sufis should be mentioned: Hazrat Shah Abdur Rahim Shahid (d. 1745 A.D.) of Dhaka, Shah Sufi Amanatullah of Dhaka, Syed Muhammad Dayem (d. 1799 A.D.) of Chittagong, Khwajah Anwar Shah (d. 1127 A.H.) of Burdwan district, Qudi Muwakkil of Chittagong, Shah Umar of Chittagong, Noor Muhammad Nizampuri (d. 1858 A.D.) of Nizampur, Chittagong, Hazrat Zaker Ali al-Qaderi (d. 1192 A.H.) of Mangal Kote, Burdwan, Tufail Ali Al-Qaderi (d. 1251. A.H.) of Mangal Kote. Maula Ali Shah of Calcutta, Shah Babullah of Mednapur.)

Some of the Sufis were renowned poets. They have expressed many complex religious matters, mysteries of Sufism as well as famous historical characters in the form of poetry. In this regard the names of the following can be remembered:

Fakir Garibullah (d. 1770 A.D.) of Hafezpur village, Howrah, wrote in Bengali a number of works namely (1) Jangnama (1694 A.D.), (2) Ameer Hamza (Part I, 1765-66), (3) Sonavan (1720), (4) Sattya pir-er Puthi, (5) Yusuf-Zulekha. Ali Raza or Kanu Fakir (d.1780) of village oskhaine, Chittagang wrote Agam, Ynan Sagar, Dhayan-mala, Yoya Kalandar, Siraj-Kulub, Satchakraved. Faqir Allahabadi (d. 1750 A.D.) of Allahabad worte a book in Persian on Hadith entitled Risala-i-Najatiya dar 'Aqa'id-i-Hadithiya in 1748 A.D. during his short stay at Islamabad. Shah Nuri.(d.1785 A.D.) of Dhaka wrote in Persian Kibrit-i-Ahmar, a book on Tasawwuf, in 1763 A.D. Syed Ruhullah al-Hussaini (d. 1212 A.H.), Mednapur, wrote Raudatul-azhar fi Manaqib-e-ahlil bait al Athhar, a book on the art of Theology. Hazrat Ghulam Ali (d. 1219 A.H.), Arambagh, Hughli, wrote Irshadut Talebin, a book on the art of writing and reciting of different forms of religious formulas generally used as "Tawiz" (amulets). Hazrat Maulana Miskin Ali Shah (d. 1846 A.D.), Nunapukur, Calcutta, wrote a Diwan which deals with the unity of God and Tasawwuf.

The Faqirs of Bengal of eighteenth century were not only engaged in meditation but also revolted against social injustice and oppression perpetrated by zamindars and other royal families over the poor cultivators. In this connection the following Faqirs should be mentioned. They are Balaki Shah of Barisal, Majnu Shah, Muhammad Reza of Sylhet, Musa Shah,Chirag Ali, Peragol Shah etc.

The influence of Persian over Bengal was more pronounced than that of Arabic because of the fact that majority of the Muslim rulers of Bengal were either Persian or Turkish and naturally they were in favour of this language. From the very beginning they adopted it as official language. The Muslim intelligentia under took all sorts of literary activities-narrative, creative, historical, religious, biographical, scientific etc. in Persian to gain favours of the rulers. On the other hand, Arabic was not generally spoken in Bengal. It is a dignified language to the Muslims as it is the language of Quran and Hadith. But its culture was mainly confined to religious circles.

Some of the historical works which are mentioned below are so authentic and resourceful that the historians of the past and present have admitted it unanimously:

Seirul Mutaqherin was written by Ghulam Husain Tabatabai khan in 1783. Its first volume starts from ancient period of India to the end of Aurangjib's reign. The second volume gives an account of the Nizamat of Murshidabad up to the time of Warren Hastings. The third volume discusses about Muhammad Shah, Hyder Ali, and Maratha war. Another book, Riyazu-s-Salatin of Ghulam Husain Salim gives the history of Bengal from the ancient period up to the time of the author **i.e.,86-88.It is a main source book for the history of** Bengal.Tarikh-i-Bangala of Munshi Salimullah was written in 1763 A.D. starting from subahdar Ibrahim Khan (1689-97 A.D.) to the death of Alivardi Khan (1740-1756 A.D.). **It is a very** authentic book.Muzaffar nama is the history of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa from 1722 A.D. to 1772 A.D. which was written by Karam Ali.Another Tarikh-i-Muzaffari written by Muhammad Ali Khan in about 1800 A.D. begins from the Muslim conquest of India to the fall of Asaf-ud Daula, Nawab of Oudh in 1797 A.D. Lubbus Siyar and Lubbut Tawarikh were written by Mirza Abu Talib in 1793 A.D.-1994 A.D. The former is the account of occurances of the world including the prophets, caliphs, Sultans and celebrated men from the beginning the his time. The later is the history of the Europe written from the works of Jonathan Scott. Tafzihul Ghafilin (1797), of the same author, gives an contemporary political and economical account of Oudh. Tarikh-i-Jahangir Nagar of Nusrat Jang, Naib Nazim of Dhaka is the concise politicalhistory of Dhaka, from the reign of Akbar (1556- 1605) to Nawab Hasmat Jang (1785-86). Waqai-i-Jang-i-Marhatta is the history of Maratha war, was written by Ali Ibrahim in 1786 A.D. Naubahar-i-Murshid Quli Khan is an historical work written by Azad al-Husaini in medieval period. It is concerned with Murshid Quli Khan. Ahwal-i-Mahabat Jang is an eyewitness account of Nawab Ali Vardi Khan and his times, written by Yusuf Ali. Waqiyat-i-Fateh Bangala,deals with the history of Alivardi's reign,was written by Muhammad Wafah.

Some of the biographical works deserve mention here: Guljar-i-Ibrahim was written by Ali Ibrahim in 1784 A.D. The biography of about three hundred Urdu poets with a brief account of their literary works has been included in this work. Suhuf-i-Ibrahim (1790) and Khulasat ul Kalam are two biographical works on the Persian poets written by Ali Ibrahim.

Basarat -ul Imama is a poetry by Ghulam Husain Tabatabai in which he has discribed the biography of his grandfather. Nasabnama of Shaikh Itisamuddin discribed the family history of the author.

There are some interesting narrative works which are mentioned below:

Ma'asir-i Talibi(1804) of Mirza Abu Talib narrates the experience of the author acquired during his tour in Europe. Shigurfnama of Shaikh Itisamuddin is the description of his journey in England.

The folloowing religious works are noteworthy :

Resala-i-Najatiya dar 'Aqa'id-i-Hadithiya is an important work on hadith written from the view point of

Apostolic traditions by Faqir Allahabadi in 1748 A.D. Hidayah, an Arabic work on Muslim Law Written by Burhanuddin Ali, was translated into Persian by Ghulam Yahya Khan in 1776. Sirajia, an Arabic work on Muslim law of inheritance written by Siraj al-Din, was translated by Muhammad Kasim under the title of Al-Faraijush Sharafia in 1776. Persian Tafsir on Quran was written by Ghulam Husain Tabatabai. An Arabic commentary on Mafatih of Mulla Muhsin Kashi and a Persian commentary entitled Sharh-i-Nukhba were composed by Mir Muhammad Ali.

Statistical account of Bengal and other states during Mughal reign are given in Khulasat-ul-Tawarikh by Kalyan Singh. Chahar Gulshan, another statistical work, was written by one Chatar Man Kayath in 1759 A.D. Hadiqat al-Iqlim written by Murtaza Husain gives an account of geographical facts.

There is no satisfactory evidences of the literary activities of Muslims in Bengali before the sixteenth century. Muslim rulers patronized the language of the people and in course of time adopted it as their own. Initially the

Muslim writers did not venture to write religious themes in Bengali for the fear of sin and peoples blame. The Muslim writers adopted the same verse form as their Hindu counterparts but the literary efforts of two communities followed quite two different paths. The Hindus were mainly concerned with themes related to Gods and Goddesses and their incurnations whereas the Muslim used to derive their inspirations and themes from Persian and Arabic sources and their subjects were related to human activities and historical traditions. Their writings were primarily aimed at propagating the knowledge of Islam and Islamic tradition and at the same time counteracting the impact of Hindu literature on the Muslim population.

The following literary efforts were aimed at instructing the Muslims in the principles and teachings of Islam.

Siraj Kulub of Ali Raza is a book on sharia written on the basis of a Persian work. Another Siraj Kulub written by Muhammad Kasim in 1790 A.D. narrates various religious matters like namaz, roza, and other duties and responsibilities towards parents. Faidul Muqtadi, a religious work written by Muhammad Muqim in 1773, also suggest duties and responsibilities of a muslim. Another Faidul Muqtadi, written by Balak Fakir deals with the religious matter suggesting the duties of a true muslim throughout his life. *Daqaequl Heqaiq* is a work on Fiqh written by Sayyid Nuruddin in 1790 A.D. It is based on an Arabic work *Konj-ud- Daqaiq* by Imam Hafizuddin Nasfee. Another works on Fiqh entitled *Hazratul Fiqh* of Muhammad Ali and *Hazar Masail* of Abdul Karim Khandekar are very famous. *Qiyamatnama* or *Rahatul Qulub* of Sayyid Nuruddin was written on matters selected from Quran and Hadith, describing at length on Qiyamat, Namaz, Roza, Heaven and Hell etc. Another *Qiyamatnama* was written by Shaikh Chand in 1734, narrating the Day of Judgement here after. *Nasihatnama* written by Afzal Ali is based on moral themes, instructing the muslims not to indulge in matters which is forbidden in Hadith.

A number of works entitled *Rasul Vijaya*, *Nabinama*, *Ambia Bani* were written on the life and teachings of last Prophet (PBUH) of Allah by Ghulam Rosul, Burhanullah, and Hayat Mahmud respectively. *Dulla Majlish* composed by Abdul Karim Khandekar in 1705, deals with the lives of many Prophets, Sahabis, Sufis, Namaz, Roza etc. *Nurnama* of the same author describes how the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was created from 'Nur'.

The following works were written on Sufism :

Agam, *Ynan Sagar* was written by Ali Reza on Sufi philosophy, Baishnab philosophy and Yoga. Satchakraved was written by the same author in which the author wanted to show the co-realation between Muslim sufism and Hindu yoga. Hitopodesh or Burhanul Arefin of Sayyid Nuruddin and Hitopodesh of Muhammad Kasim were written on **Tasawwuf.** Sirnama was written by Kazi Shaikh Mansur in which he discussed various religious matter including secrets of mysticism. Mainamatir Gan of Sukur Mahmud deals with the renouncement of luxurious life and adoption of the perilous path of a saint by king Gopi Chandra.

There are several Jangnamas written by different authors like Muhammad Yakub, Fakir Garibullah. and Hayat Mahmud. Some other works based on war themes are Amir Hamza and Jaiguner puthi by Sayyid Hamza, Kesemer Larai by Sherbaz, Sonavan and Amir Hamza (Part I) of Garibulla.

Some works based on religio- romantic theme are as follows :

Gada Mallika of Shaikh Sadi, Gul-i-Bakauli of Muhammad Mukim, Zebulmulk Shamarokh of Muhammad Rafiuddin, Shah Parir Ketchcha of Paragol , Madhumalali of Sayyid Hamza, Yusuf Zulekha of Fakir Garibullah.

This is a brief description of the thesis which is being presented for the award of Ph.D. Degree.

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CHAIRMAN

Certified that the work embodied in this thesis entitled "Bengal's Contribution to Islamic Studies during the 18th Century" is the result of the original researches carried out under my supervision by Ms. Shabnam Begum and is suitable for submission for the award of the Ph.D. degree of Aligarh Muslim University.

(Prof. M. Salim Kidwai)

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In the name of Allah, the most benificient, the most marciful, whose blessings proved most faithful to complete my work.

It is my great pleasure to acknowledge Professor Salim Kidwai, Chairman, Department of Islamic Studies for his skilled guidance and valuable suggestions which he rendered in preparing this thesis. It is needless to mention, without his active co-operation this thesis could not have seen the light of the day.

I owe a very special debt of gratitute to Professor Akmal Ayyubi, Ex-Chairman, Department of Islamic Studies for his kind encouragement and invaluable help.

I express my gratefulness to Professor K.A. Jaisi, Ex-chairman, Professor Yasin Mazhar Siddique, Professor Azduddin Khan, Department of Islamic Studies for their valuable suggestions from time to time.

My heartfelt thanks are also due to Professor Muhammad Shahidullah, Principal, Calcutta Madrasah Collge, Professor Ainul Bari, Calcutta Madrasah College, Professor Abdus Subhan, Department of Persian, Maulana Azad College for their help at the moment when I was almost groping in the dark in search of literature.

I do not find words to thank Dr. Muhammad Kalimuddin, Assistant librarian of Calcutta Univeresity for the great help he rendered in preparing this thesis. Mr. Kabir Ahmad Khan, librarian of the Institute of Islamic Studies, Baqar Ali Khan of Maulana Azad Library, Aligarh, Dr. Mazhar ul Islam, librarian of Buhar Section of National Library of Calcutta, Khallaue Saheb, Assistant librarian of Islamic Section of Asiatic Society of Bengal, Maniruzzaman of Bangladesh Library and Information Centre, Calcutta, deserve particular mention, since they have been generous enough in providing me with library facilities and valuable suggestions.

I must recall with pleasure my friends especially Adam Malik Khan, Bilal Ahmad Kutti, Mustaq, Aizaj Ahmad, Ghulam Nabi, Ghazanfar, Shabnam Parveen, Ghazala Yasmin, Tasneem Abdus Samad, Muhammad Hasibur Rahman and Muhammad Niamat Ali for their co-operation and helpful attitudes at various stages of my work. I am really grateful to M/S MEC TYPEWRITINGS, Krimi Buldg., Purani Chungi, Anupshahar Road, Aligarh, for their cooperation in typing this thesis.

I must put on record the help rendered by my younger sister Shahnaz and my husband Akhtaruzzaman in overcoming various domestic hurdles which were obstructing my progress in work.

Last but not the least, I have greatly enjoyed the mischivious interruptions made by my two and half year-old kid Imtiaz by hiding pen and other necessary things in a playful mood during my work.

INTRODUCTION

The term Banglah (Anglicised Bengal) is derived from the word 'Banga' which was originally the name of a few south-eastern districts at the mouth of the Ganges.[1] The geographical boundary of Bengal was not a static entity. It has been changed many a time in accordance with the change of its rulers.

As regards the racial stocks to which the original inhabitants of Bengal belonged are not definitely known. The people of Bengal show a wide variety of colour and physical features which amply suggest that a wide spread conglomeration of various racial stocks took place in pre-historic and proto-historic times. It is a well known fact that the Dravidians were repulsed by the Aryans towards the south of the Indian subcontinent. It can be safely assumed that some of them took refuge in Bengal on their way to the south. Some Aryan elements are also found in some sections of the population. Tribal people like the Santals, the Khasis are also found in Bengal. They are thought to be of proto Australoid in origin. The people of southern

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[1] Muhammad Mohar Ali, History of the Muslims of Bengal, Immam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University, Riyadh, vol. I A, 1985, p. 1.

Chittagong and theHill Tracts exhibit Mongolid features. A large part of Muslim population of the land are descendant of Muslim immigrants from different countries mainly from Persia, Arabia, Turkishtan, Afganistan etc. The rest of the Muslim population are converts to Islam. So it is clear that the population of Bengal is heterogeneous in origin.

In the long annals of the history of Bengal the eighteenth century occupies a unique position. In this century Muslim regime came to an end and British dominion was firmly established in Bengal. Many scholars have done commendable research on various aspects and brought out many valuable works on this century. But aspects like "Bengal's Contribution to Islamic Studies" have not been properly explored. The purpose of this study is to find out the nature and roots of Islamic learning in Bengal, the institutions and scholars of Bengal during eighteenth century.

At the begining it would he fair to clarify the territorial area of Bengal during eighteenth century. The territory of Bengal under Muslim rule during 1701-1757, was slightly different from that of British rule (1757-1800). It included not only the British Indian Province of Bengal but also some part of Bihar in the west, a small part of Assam in the east, a strip of Orissa in the South West.

In the present study the territory whcih is predominently inhabited by Bengali speaking people, has been taken into consideration which more or less conform to that of British Indian province of Bengal.

Here I want to define what I mean by Islamic Studies and Bengal's contribution to it.

Islamic studies is not a narrow concept. It includes all studies which either originated with Islam or developed and advanced under its influence, be they theological, philosophical, literary, scientific or historical.[1] Thus Islamic studies covers a very vast area which deal with all the phases of Islam and Muslims, past and present, regional and universal, religious and political, cultural and Social.[2]

Bengal's contributions means works contributed by Bengalis whether living within the aforementioned territory of Bengal or outside it and also by non-Bengalis while resided in Bengal.

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[1] N. Akmal Ayyubi, Presidential Address, Bulletin of the Institute of Islamic studies, Aligarh, No. 22 , 1989 , p. 1.

[2] Ibid.

It is not possible in the present work to cover the whole gamute of Islamic Studies. Only a few components of it have been discussed which are mentioned below.

The section I of the first chapter is entitled "Early Muslim Contact with Bengal". From the historical evidences, it has become clear that the Muslims saints, traders, tourists from Persia, Arabia, Turkistan, Afganistan came to Bengal between eight to thirteenth century A.D. Section II discusses about the "Socio-political Contact of Muslims with Bengal" which start from Ikhtiyaruddin's conquerence of Bengal upto the end of the eighteenth century. The patronage of the Muslim rulers towards the scholars, the sufis and the poors, and construction of mosques, madrasahs, Khanqas, and caravansarai by them have all been deat with in this section.

The second chapter is "Religius Institutions of Bengal in the eighteenth Century". The various institutions established by Muslim rulers, the nobles and British have been, mentiooned in this chapter.

The third chapter is entitled "The Sufis of the eighteenth Century". The preachings and the achievements of the sufis have been highlighted in this chapter. Some of the sufis were specially gifted with literary talents.and they have been includeded in the subquent chapters.

"Arabic and Persian Literatures in Bengal during eighteenth century" along with a biographical note are discursed in the IV chapter.

The fifth chapter deals with the "Contribution of muslims to Bengali Literature during eighteenth century."

In the last the whole thesis is concluded where the whole work and its importance have been analysed.

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SECTION - I

EARLY MUSLIM CONTACT WITH BENGAL

EARLY MUSLIM CONTACT WITH BENGAL

The maritime relations of the Arabs with India were very old. They carried on a prosperous trade in spices, ivory and precious stones. It has been recorded that as early as in the time of Agatharcide (B.C. 177-100) a large number of Arabs had come to settle on the Malabar coast.[1] "Bengal's contact with the Muslims, especially in the field of trade, colonization and missionary work, began much earlier than its conquest in the thirteenth century."[2] Arab Muslim traders had carried on lucrative trade with the port of 'Samandar' and other places. Abu al-Qasim Ubaid, Allah ibn Khurdadhbih (d. 300 A.H./912 A.D.) refers to this port where rice ~~and~~ aloe-wood were found in abundance.[3] According to the description of Arab geographer, Abu Abd Allah ~~at~~ Idrisi (d. 561 A.H./1164 A.D.), Samandar, the port of rice and aloe-wood, seems to indicate the principal port in the ganges delta.[4] This commercial town was frequented -

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1. Gazatteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol.IX, Part II, Bombay, 1899, p.1.
2. J.N Sarkar, Islam in Bengal, 13th to 19th century, Ratna Prakashani, Calcutta, 1972, p. 20
3. Ibn Khurdadhbih, Abul Kasim Obaidallah, ibn Abdullah, Kitab Al-Masalik Wa'l-Mamalik, (edited by M.J. DE. Goeje), E.J.Brill, Leiden, 1889, p. 63-64.
4. Al-Sharif Al-Idrisi, Kitab Nuzhat Al-Mushtaq Fi'khtiraq Al-'Afaq, some portion translated by S. Maqbul Ahmad under the title of India and the Neighbouring Territories, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1960, P. 122.

by merchants of all countries[1].

Dr. Abdul Karim identifies 'Samandar' with Chittagong.[2] Many scholars are of the openion that the Arab Muslims not only carried on their business along these coastal regions but also permanantly settled there in a large number, especially in the district of Chittagong and Noakhali. There are many circumstantial evidences in favour of this conclusion. Firstly, the name Chittagong itself is derived from the Arabic terms "Shat al-Ganga" (the bank of Ganga). The Arab merchants called this place as Shat al-Ganga in their language. Chittagong was the local variation of the above term.[3]

Secondly, modern Chittagonian language is a peculiar admixture of Arabic and Bengali words, About 50% of their vocabulary is of Arabic origin. Name of many places still bears the Arabic name and many Arab customs and games are still prevalent there, in appearance many Chittagonian muslims resemble Arabs. Such extensive Arabicization was not possible by mere occasional contact, rather it was the

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1. Elliot and Dowson, The History of India as told by its own Historians, London, 1867, vol. I, p. 90.

2. A. Karim, Samandar of the Arab Geographers, J.A.S.P., vol. III, No. 2, 1963, Dacca, pp. 13-24.

3. M.A. Rahim, Social and Cultural History of Bengal, vol. I, (1201-1576), Karachi, 1963, p. 43.

result of prolonged and constant interaction with a sizeable number of resident Arabs in that region[1].

Thirdly, according to the description of Burbosa, a portuguese merchant, who paid a visit to this place in about 1518 A.D., Chitagong was a prosperous city of Bengal and mainly inhabited by the rich Muslim merchants of Arabia, Persia and Abyssinia.[2]

The growth of such a commercial community was not a sudden phenomenon and as this area was not brought under effective control by the Muslims till the sixteenth century A.D., it may be assumed that these foreign Muslim merchants had settled in the coastal port-town of Bengal much before the muslim conquest of Bengal.

There is archaeological evidence that the Arab Muslims had not confined themselves in the castal regions only but also penetrated far into the interior as well. Some ancient coins which date back to the period of the great Abbasid caliph Harun al-Rashied's (170 A.H.-208 A.H./786 A.D.-809 A.H.) have been found at the ancient Buddhist site at

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1. Muhammad Enamul Haque, Purva Pakistane Islam, Dhaka, 1948, p. 19.

2. Barbosa, Daurte, Hakluyt, vol. II, pp. 144-145, cited by Muhammad Mohar Ali, in History of the Muslims of Bengal, vol. IA, 1985, Riyadh, p. 41.

Paharpur in Rajshahi district[1] and the other coins in the ruins of Mainamati in Cumilla district.[2] It may be reasonably assumed that these coins might be taken there by some Muslim traders or preachers in the eighth or nineth century of Christian era. This also strengthens the point mentioned earlier that the trade links between Bengal and Arab countries existed from the very beginning. So Arab Muslims had come in contact with Bengal much earlier than the thirteenth century.

Fourthly, many Shaikhs, Ulama and Sufis came to Bengal before the Muslim conquest to preach Islam. The most prominent among them were Sultan Mahmud Mahi Sawar (1047 A.D.) who preached Islam at Mahasthangarh, Baba Adam Shahid (458 A.H./1189 A.H.) spread Islam in Dhaka region during the reign of Ballal Sen.[3] Shah Sultan Rumi is said to have come to Bengal in 1053[4] A.D. He spread Islam at Netrokona in Mymensingh district.

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1. K.N. Dikshit, 'Excavations at Paharpur, Bengal', Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India, No. 55, Delhi, 1938, p. 87.
2. Shaikh Sharafuddin, Bangladeshe Sufi-Probhab-o-Islam Prochar, Dhaka, 1982, p. 2.
3. Muhammad Abdullah, Bangladesher Khetonama Arabibid, 1986, Dhaka, p. 7.
4. Muhammad Enamul Haque, Bange Sufi Prabhab, Calcutta, 1935, p. 138.

SECTION - II

SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTACT OF MUSLIMS WITH BENGAL

SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTACT OF MUSLIMS WITH BENGAL

Muhammad Ghori's conquest of Northern India during the last decade of 12th and opening year of 13th century may be regarded as the first step in the establishment of Muslim rule in Bengal. The second step was the sucessful expedition of Ikhtiyaruddin Muhammad bin Baktiyar Khilji[1] into Bengal. When Ikhtiyaruddin invaded Bengal in 1203-4 A.D., it was under the rule of Lakhshaman Sena, the very old and tottered king had neither the strength nor the courage to encounter Ikhtiyaruddin, so he fled away through the backdoor of his palace.[2]

Ikhtiyaruddin, a brilliant personality of Islamic history and one of the greatest generals of his time consolidated his rule within a very short period.

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[1] Major Raverty in his translation of Tabaqat-i-Nasiri, (Tabaqat-i-Nasiri, Minhaj-ud-Din, Abu-Umar-i-Usman, translated by H.G. Raverty, vol. I, First printed at the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1881, Reprinted at New Delhi in 1970, p. 548) says that the Khiljis were the tribe of Turks. They in the former time settled in Gramsir in Afghanistan. The Khiljis or Khaljis are erroneously identified as the Afghan tribes of Ghilji or Ghalji by many writers. Ikhtiyar uddin belonged to Gramsir of Afghanistan from there he came to Hindustan and entered the Service of Sultan Muizzuddin.

[2] Ghulam Hussain Salim, Riyazu-s-Salatin, translated by Abdus Salam, Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, 1903, p.63.

Though the attainment of political sovereignty was his main concern but he was not aloof from his religious duty. "Mosques, Madrasas (school of Muslim learning) and khanqahs (monasteries) arose in the new abode of Islam through Muhammad Bakhtyar's beneficence, and his example was worthily imitated by his Amirs... His fame endures and will endure so long as Islam survives in the land".[1]

Before the invasion of Muslims, the persons of humble origin who were living there were subjected to invidious caste system under the Brahamananical hierarchy. They were neither allowed to come to the fore-front nor even allowed to touch the scripture of their own religion. With the advent of Islam, a new faith and a new culture were brought to the land which freed human intellects and talents from the shakles of caste and superstition. The teaching of Islam had brought them a glorious prospect, a new lease of life, so they were found to embrace Islam.

Prior to the Muslim conquest of Bengal, political, cultural and economical developments were at ~~a~~ primitive stage, obviously because of its seclusion from the outer world. The Muslim conquest brought it to the outer world and its trade and commerce flourished in an unprecedented way. - Muslims were the people who first introduced regular gold and silver coinage in the land.

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[1] J N. Sarkar, History of Bengal (edited), vol. II, Muslim period, 1200-1757, The University of Dacca, Dacca, 1948, p.14.

Alauddin Ali Mardan Khilji (1210-13 A.D.)

During the reign of Alaud-din Ali Mardan Khilji, Qadi Ruknud-din Muhammad Samar~~k~~qandi was the most famous theologian of Lakhnauti. He studied Sanskrit and local languages from Bhojar Brahman of Assam. Bhojar Brahman was the author of a sanskrit work on the science of Yoga entitled Amrita Kunda.[1] The Brahman was impressed by the teachings of Islam and accepted Islam. "He discussed the contents of his own work with the Qadi, who admired it so much that he first translated it into Persian and then in Arabic."[2]

Sultan Ghiasuddin Iwaz Khilji (1208-1210, 1213-1227)

Husamuddin Iwaz Khilji ascended the throne of Lakhnauti second time in 1213 A.D. and assumed the title of

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[1] The original translations are not available in any where. A second persian recension by an anonymous writer is available in the libraries of Europe and Islamic countries. For details see Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society, Karachi, Vol. I, Part I, January, 1953, p. 53.

[2] Saghir Hasan al-Masumi, Bengal's contribution to Islamic Learning, Islamic Studies, Journal of the Islamic Research Institute of Pakistan, vol. VI, March, 1967, p 158.

Sultan Ghiasuddin Iwaz Khilji and ruled Bengal upto 1227 A.D. He was an eminent educationist in his time, he liberally extended his patronage to men of learning. He gave pensions to the learned, Ulama, the Mashaikhs and the Sayyids.[1]

According to N.N. Law, the Sultan built a superb mosque, a college and a caravanserai at Lakhnauti soon after his accession to the masnad of Bengal.[2] During his reign, Jalaluddin b. Jamaluddin Ghaznawi of Firozkoh, a Muslim saint came to Lakhnauti. The saint was invited to deliver a theological lecture in the Royal Audience Hall. He was rewarded with eighteen thousand tankahs by the Sultan and nobles for his erudition.[3]

During the first half of the 13th century Taqiuddin Arabi, probably from Arabia, with an aim to spread Islamic education in Bengal, came to Mahisun in Rajshahi. The Madrasah founded by him is said to be the first Islamic Madrasah in bengal.[4]

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1. N.N. Law, Promotion of Learning in India during Muhammadan Rule, Longmans, Green & Co., London, 1916, p. 106.
2. Ibid.
3. Minhaj-i-Siraj, Tabaqat-i-Nasiri, edited by W.N. Lees, Khadim Husain and Abdul Hayy, Bibliotheca Indica, Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, 1864, p. 161-62.
4. Abdul Mannan Talib, Bangladeshe Islam, Dhaka, Adhunik Prakasani, 1980, p. 97.

Bengal under the Mamluks (1227-1287 A.D.)

With the death of Ghiasuddin Iwaz Khilji, Bengal lost its independent status and came under the rule of Mamluks or slaves of Imperial court of Delhi. During this period they were so much busy with internal struggle that they could not spare sufficient time and proper attention for the spread of Islamic education in Bengal.

During the reign of Ghiasuddin Balban, Allama Shaikh Sharaf al-Din Abu Tawamah came and settled at Sonargaon, near Dhaka in the year 1270 A.D. He established a great Madrasah there for the study of Quran, Hadith and Tafsir. He first started to teach Sahih al Bukhari and Sahih al Muslim. According to Talib, Shaikh Sharaf al-Din was the pioneer of Islamic education in this region.[1]

During the reign of Balban, proselytisation on a large scale was started mainly by the sufi saints of Islam. Their examplary character, the fervour of their faith brought a new hope for the downtrodden, oppressed and low caste Hindus. They saw Islam as the salvation of their all hurdles and ill-treatments and they readily embrased Islam. So with the attainment of military and political conquest, moral and spiritual conquest were also achieved through the efforts of Sufi saints of Islam.[1]

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[1] Ibid, p. 97-100.

Sultan Ruknuddin Kaikaus (1291-1301 A.D.)

Ruknuddin Kaikaus, son of Bughra Khan ascended the throne of Lakhnauti. His general Zafar Khan built a mosque at Gangarampore in 697 A.H./1297 A.D. during his reign.[2]

Sultan Shamsud-din Firuz Shah (1301-1322 A.D.)

Sultan Shamsuddin Firuz Shah ascended the throne in 1301 A.D. He was the son of Nasiruddin Mahmud, a brother of Kaikaus. He shifted his capital from Lakhnauti to Pandua (Hughli). He encouraged and helped Hazrat Shah Safiufdin and Hazrat Shah Jalal to spread Islam and Islamic education. Important centre of Arabic Studies in Bangladesh was set up at Syllet by its patron saint, shah Jalal (d. 1347) during the middle of the 14th century A.D. "Although no specimen of Arabic writing belonging to the period has come down to us, it is quite certain that Shah Jalal's Sylhet was an important centre of scholastic activities, which constitute the main planks of Islamic proselytizing efforts".[3] Zafar

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1. J N. Sarkar, History of Bengal, op. cit., p. 69.
2. J.A.S.B , part, I, No. I, 1872, pp. 103-104.
3. Abdus Subhan, Arabic, Persian and Urdu Literatures, History of Bangladesh (1704-1971), vol. III, Social and Cultural, History, edited by Sirajul Islam, Asiatic society of Bangladesh, 1992, p. 436.

Khan, general of Rukunuddin Kaikaus also founded a Madrasah in 1313 A.D. at Tribeni during Shamsuddin Firoz Shah's reign.[1]

Sultan Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah (1338-1349 A.D.)

After the death of Shamsuddin Firuz Shah, there occured an internal conflict among his sons for power. Ghiasuddin Tughlaq, Sultan of Delhi took advantage of this situation and moved towards Bengal in 1324 A.D. His adopted son Bahram Khan was given the charge of governorship of Sonargaon. After the death of Bahram Khan, Fakhruddin, armour bearer of Bahram Khan captured the power in 1338 A.D. Moroccan traveller, Ibn Batuta who visited Bengal during 1345-1346 A.D. speaks highly of him. He was a wise benevolent king, kind towards strangers and guests and had high respect for sufis and learned scholers. He even appointed one such sufi named Shaida as his deputy at Satgaon.[2]

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Sultan Shamsuddin Ilyas Shah (1342-1357 A.D.)

Ilyas Shah captured power at Pandua by the year 1342 A.D. He was a very pious Muslim and had high regards for

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[1] J.C.K. Peterson, *Bengal District Gazetteers*, *Burdwan*, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1910, p. 173.

[2] Atul Chandra Roy, *History of Bengal: Turko-Afghan Period*, Kalyani Publishers, New Delhi, 1986, p. 105.

Muslim saints. Two famous preachers of Islam. Shaikh Akhi Sirajuddin and Shaikh Raja Biyabani (d 754/1353) lived at Firuzabad during Ilyas Shah's reign. Sultan had great faith for Biyabani.[1]

Sikander Shah (1357-89 A.D.)

He was equally strong and capable king like his father, Shamsuddin Ilyas Shah. He constructed many magnificent buildings and mosques of which the Adina mosque at Pandua is most famous.[2] These buildings were used as centres of learning and for other general beneficial purposes. During his reign a mosque at Mulla Simla was built by Ulugh Mukhlic Khan in 777 A.H./1375 A.D.[3] One inscription on the Dargah of Maulana Ata informs that "the building was made by the order of Sikandar Shah, son of Ilyas Shah in 765 A.H./1363 A.H."[4]

The famous preacher of Islam, Shaikh Ala al-Haq, is (800 A.H./1398 A.D.) said to be a descendant of Quraish family of Mecca lived at Pandua during his time. Ala al-Haq used to spend great amount of money for free boarding to the

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1. Riyazu-s-Salatin, op. cit., p. 102
2. Ibid, p. 105.
3. J.A.S.B., part I, No. IV, 1870, p. 291-292.
4. J.A.S.B., part I, 1872, p. 104-105.

students of Madrasahs, for the poor and for the sufi dervishes.[1]

Ghiasuddin Azam Shah (1389-1409)

Ghiasuddin Azam Shah, son of Sikandar shah, was the greatest and most famous of the Iliyas Shahi Sultans of Bengal.[2] He was pious, brave, generous and magnanimous. He was a very learned person and liberally patronized the learned and the pious. He used to compose verses in Arabic and Persian and had contact with the celebrated poet of Persia, Hafiz. He sent immense gifts to the people of Mecca and Medina. He also founded two madrasahs, one at Mecca and the other at Medina for dissemination of Islamic learning.

Qutb

He was a fellow student of Nur Qutub Alam, a celebrated saint. They both studied theology under Hamid ud-din, a saint of Nagore (Birbhum).[3]

Raja Ganesh or Kans (1414-16 A.D.)

Raja Ganesh or Kans who was a zamider of Bhaturiah ascended the throne of Bengal taking advantage of the

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1. Saghir Hasan al-Masumi, Bengal's Contribution to Islamic Learning, op. cit, p. 167.
2. Muhammad Mohar Ali, History of the Muslims of Bengal, vol. IA, Imam Muhammad Ibn Sa'ud Islamic University, Riyadh, 1985, p. 140 .
3. Charles Stewart, History of Bengal from the first Mohammedan Invasion until the Virtual Conquest of that Country by the English in A.D. 1757, London, 1813, pp.92-93.

position of influence in the court of Ilyas Shahi. He wanted to supplant Muslim rule in Bengal. He saw that the Muslims were much superior and brave and so he treated them with mildness and affability. He granted pension to the learned Muslims during his brief period of reign.[1] This bestowal of stipends was not, however, for the promotion of learning but was mixed with an ulterior political purpose.

Jalaluddin Muhammad Shah (1418-1433A.D.)

Jadu, son of Kans who accepted Islam during the period of his father, was enthroned under the title, Jalaluddin Muhammad Shah. He was the first Muslim who inscribed 'Kalima' on the coins.[2] He is soid to have belonged to Hanafi School and staunch follower of the principles of Islam. At Gaur, he built a mosque, a reservoir (Jalali tank) and a sarai, and helped his people to learn the preachings of Islam.

Nasiruddin Mahmud Shah (1437-1459 A.D.)

After the death of Jalaluddin his son was enthroned, but as he was young and had no experience he was killed by his commanders Shadi Khan and Nasir Khan. Nasir Khan occupied the throne but soon the nobles and other officers killed Nasir Khan and enthroued Nasiruddin Mahmud Shah, grandson of Ilyas Shah.

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[1] Ibid, p. 94.

[2] Atul Chandra Roy History of Bengal, Turko-Afghan period, op. cit., pp. 216-2 17.

He was a man of peaceful nature. During his reign peace and prosperity prevailed throughout the country and Muslim colonization expanded especially in its southern region through the efforts of Khan Jahan (d. 863/1459) whose tomb is situated near Bagherhat in the Khulna district. He erected an imposing sixty-dome mosque, a mile to the south-west of his tomb. Another mosque, small but of similar design was constructed by him about twenty miles to the west of sixty dome mosque.[1] At Satgaon (Hughli) a mosque was contructed by Kamal Azam Tarbiyat Khan during the reign of Nasiruddin Mahmud Shah.[2]

Ruknuddin Barbak Shah (1459-1474 A.D.)

Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud Shah was succeeded by his son Ruknuddin Barbak Shah. During his reign Shah Ismail Ghazi, a learned Sufi who was Sayyid by lineage and a Makki by birth, came to Bengal.[3] One inscription in the village of Deotala informs that a Jami mosque was built by Ulugh Murabit Khan

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1. Mohar Ali, History of the Muslims of Bengal, vol. IA, op. cit, pp, 165-166.

2. J.A.S.B., 1873, pp. 270-271.

3. Saghir Hasan al Masumi, Bengal's Contribution to Islamic Learning, op. cit., p. 160.

in 868 A.H./1464 A.H. during the time of the "Just, liberal learned and wise king Ruknuddunya Waddin Abul Muzaffar Mahmud Shah, the king, son of Mahmud Shah".[1]

Shamsuddin Yusuf Shah (1476-1481 A.D.)

Shamuddin Yusuf Shah, son of Ruknuddin Barbak Shah was a strict muslim who enforced the rules of Shariat and made his kingdom a truely Islamic state. A number of mosques were constructed during his reign. In Gaur, near the village of Umarpur, there is a plot of land which the people call Darasbari. There is a mosque on the same site known as Darasbari Masjid. An inscription found here records the construction of a mosque by Shamsuddin Yusuf Shah in the year 884 A.H./1479 A.D. Most probably a madrasah was also attached to the mosque.[2]

Jalaluddin Fath Shah (1481-1487 A.D.)

The son of Yusuf Shah being incompetent, the throne was offered to Fath Shah, son of Mahmud Shah by the nobles. He ruled the country peacefully for about seven years which is marked by steady spread of Muslim settlements and Islam in the country.

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[1] J.A.S.B., Part I, No. III, 1874, pp. 296-297.

[2] Promotion of Learning in India, op. cit ., p.106.

According to inscription hitherto available, three mosques were erected in Dhaka by Baba Salih, a pious man and a high official of the state, during the reign of Jalaluddin Fath Shah. One mosque was coustructed at Bandar opposite Khizirput village in 886 A.H./1482 A.D.[1] The second was built at Azimnager. The inscription of the mosque reads that "the building was completed on first Muharram 910 [or 901, - the number are unclear".[2] The third one was built at Sunargaon in 284. 911 A.H.[3]

Besides Baba Salih's mosque three other mosques were built in Dhaka district during Fath Shah's reign. One of these was built by Zahirul Millat Waddin Malikul Mulk Akhund Shir in the year 887 A.H./ 1482 A.D.[4] Its exact location is not availble. The second one, a Jami mosque, was found at village Qadi Qasbah in Vikrampur. It was built by Malik Kafur in 888 A.H./1483 A.D.[5] This mosque is popularly Known as Masjid of Adam Shahid. The third mosque was constructed at Sonargaon by Muqarrab al-Daulat in 1484 A.D.

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1. J.A.S.B. Part I, No, III, 1873, pp. 282-283.
2. Ibid, p. 284.
3. Ibid, p. 283.
4. J.A.S.B., Part I, No. I, 1872, p. 109-110.
5. Ibid, part I, No. III, 1873, p. 284.

Saifuddin Firuz Shah II (1487-1490 A.D.)

Malik Andil ascended the throne assuming the title of Saifuddin Firuz Shah II. He was a benevolent, generous and kind king, and also a patron of art and architecture. During his reign he constructed a mosque, a tower and a water reservoir in Gaur. The tower, Firuz Minar has survived the ravages of time[1] and still in a fair state of preservation. At Goamati, a mosque was built by Mukhlic Khan in 894 A.H./1489 A.D. during the reign of Firuz Shah.[2]

Nasiruddin Mahmud Shah II (1490 A.D.)

Nasiruddin Mahmud Shah II, son of Saifuddin Firuz Shah II ruled for a short period. One inscription found in a mosque at Gaur has described him as "the help of Islam and the Muslim".[3] During his short reign he at least constructed two mosques, one of them being at Burdwan.

Shamsuddin Muzaffar Shah (1491-1493 A.D.)

The historians have described him as a tyrant king but he patronised his religion. He built a mosque at Gaur.[4]

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[1] Atul Chandra Roy, History of Bengal, Turko-Afghan Period, op. cit., pp. 250-253.

[2] J.A.S.B., part I, No. III, 1874, p. 299.

[3] Ibid, part I, No. III, 1873, p. 289.

[4] Riyazu-s-Salatin, op. cit, p. 128.

Sultan Alauddin Husain Shah (1493-1519 A.H.)

Sultan Alauddin Husain Shah was an outstanding figure in Muslim Bengal. From the very beginning he devoted himself to the promotion of Islam in his state and he was also tolerant towards non-muslim subjects. Many mosques and colleges were built, during his reign, for the spread of Islamic learning. He established a college as a memorial of the famous saint Qutb Qutub ul- Alam, According to Stewart he settled a grant of lands for the support of the tomb, college and hospital of the celebrated saint Qutb Qutab ul-Alam.[1] The ruins of an elegant Madrasah built by Husain Shah on the north bank of Sagar Dighi (a reservoir) in Gaur have been discovered.[2] Another excellent Madrasah, Gurra-i-Shahid was created by him in 907 A.H./1502 A.D. in Gaur for the teaching of Sciences of Islam.[3]

Husain Shah himself was a very learned man and patronized men of letters, irrespective of caste and creed. He patronized Muhammad bin Yazdan Bakhsh, a Muhaddith, popularly known as khawjagi Shirwani, who transcribed the

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1. History of Bengfal from the first Mohammedan Invasion until the Virtual Conquest of that Country by the English, in A.D. 1757, op.cit, p.113.
2. Ravenshaw, J.H., Gour: Its Ruins and Inscriptions, London, 1878, p.23.
3. Muhammad Ishaq, Indias Contribution to the Study of Hadith Literature, The University of Dacca, East Pakistan, 1955, p. 115.

Sahih al-Bukhari in three volumes in the year 911 A.H./1503 A.D.[1]

Sultan Nasiruddin Nusrat Shah (1519-1532 A.D.)

Sultan Nasiruddin Nusrat Shah, son of Ala ud-Din Husain Shah was wise, just and well behaved. During the first half of his reign at least five mosques were constructed at different parts of his kingdom. The Sultan had two great Jami mosques built, one at Rajshahi and the other one, the famous Bara Sona Masjid at Gaur. During the second half of his rule, four general mosques and four Jami mosques were erected. The famous Qadam Rasul Building was built in 1531 A.D., a year before his death.[2]

During the reign of Nusrat Shah, Taki al-Din bin Ain al-Din established a mosque in 1522 A.D. Quran, Hadith and Fiqh were taught there.[3]

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Firuz Shah III (1532-1533 A.D.)

After Nusrat Shah, his son Firuz Shah III ascended the throne and he reigned for about a year only. During this short period his commander and wazir, Malik constructed a Jami Mosque at Kalna in Burdwan district in 1533.

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[1] Askar Ibn Shaikh, Muslim Amale Banglar Sasankarta, Islamic Foundation, Dhaka, 1988, p. 124.

[2] Dani, Ahmad Hasan, Bibliography of Muslim Inscriptions of Bengal (Down to A.D. 1538), vol. II, Dacca, 1957, No. 139.

[3] Muhammad Abdullah, Bnagladesher Khatonama Arabibid, Islamic Foundation, Dhaka, 1986, p. 6.

Muhmud Shah III (1533-1538 A.D.)

After Firuz Shah, Mahmud Shah III, son of Alauddin Husain Shah ascended the throne. The reign of Mahmud Shah III, though full of troubles, was not devoid of construction activities. A Jami mosque named Jhanjhania mosque was built in the year 1535 A.D. at Gaur. Two other mosques, on at Jowar at Mymensingh district, another at Gaur were founded in year 1535 A.D. and 1536-37 A.D. respectively.

In 1538 Sher Khan conquered Bengal by defeating Mahmud Shah. Bengal lost its independence of nearly two hundred years.

Bengal under the Afghans (1538 A.D.-1576 A.D.)

The Husain Shahi dynasty was supplanted by Sher Khan. The Victory at Surajgarh (1534 A.D.- 1576 A.D.) made him master of Bihar and then of Gaur. In the year 1538-39 A.D., Sher Khan had to give way to Humayun for the time being but at last in Mughal-Afghan contest for supremacy, Sher Khan succeeded. He recovered Bengal in the battle of Chausa (1539 A.D.). The battle of Bilgram (1540 A.D.) made him Emperor. Now Bengal came under Delhi for thirteen years (1540-1553

A.D.). bengal again attained independence due to **weak** administration of Sher Shah's son, Islam Shah. Bengal enjoyed this independence for twenty three years first under the viceregal family of the Surs (1553-1564 A.D.) and then under Pathan Karrani dynasty (1564-1576 A.D.)

Bengal under the Mughals

The last Afghan king of Bengal, Daud Shah karrani, was executed by the Mughal general khan Jahan in 1576 after the battle of Rajmahal. With his death the Afghan era ended but the Mughal did not get dominion over Bengal. The Afghan Amirs and Chiefs who had been scattered over the different parts of the country fought against the Mughal for more than thirty years. At last Islam Khan succeeded in subduing the Afghan leaders and chiefs in 1612 A.D. From now Bengal came under Mughal rule. A large number of viceroys namely Qasim khan (1614-1617), Ibrahim Khan (1617-1624), Qasim Khan (1625-1632) Azam Khan (1632-1635), Islam Khan (1635-1639), Prince Muhammad Shuja (1639-1660), Mir Jumla (1660-1663) ruled Bengal.

Shaista Khan (1664-1678 A.D., 1679-1688 A.D.)

Shaista Khan was appointed governor of Bengal, first in 1664 to 1678 and then from 1679 to 1688. He was a bold and dynamic person. But "with all his greatness, Shaista khan was meck and humble, courteous and affable, just and liberal, brave, noble, and enlightened. He established mosques with madrasas, rest houses, bridges, and roads throughout India, and his charitices were wide".[1] As per Bradley Birt, 'no other viceroy or governor has so impressed his memory upon Dhaka. It is truely the city of Shaista Khan'.[2] Small Katra, the Lalbagh Palace and some mosques are still found in fair condition. Shaista Khan had built a madrasah named Pathartali on the bank of Budhi Ganga at Dhaka. This madrasah was originally attached to a mosque. The inscription of the mosque reads that "Shaista Khan had made a rich endowment for the maintenance of the mosques and for the help of the needy and the deserving people and for those who looked after the upkeep of the mosque".[3] Shah Nuri, the popular saint of Dhaka, studied in this madrasah.[4]

The contemporary European observer, Manucci states that "Shaista Khan was a man of ripe judgment, very wealthy and powerful and of good reputation, for he was very charitable, distributing every year in alms 50 thousand rupees. For this

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1. Riyazu-s-Salatin, op. cit, p. 227.
2. Bradley-Birt, The Romance of an Eastern Capital (Dacca), London, 1906, pp. 26-27.
3. Saghir Hasan Al-Masumi, Bengal's contribution to Islamic Learning, op. cit., p. 161.
4. Ibid; Abdul Hasnat Nadwi, Hindustan ki-Qadim Islami Darasgahen, Ma'arif Press, Azamgarh, 1936, p. 56.

purpose, in each of the principal cities of the empire, he employed officials who looked after the daily gifts of food and clothes to the most necessitious of the poor and succoured the widows and the orphans".[1]

After Shaista Khan the viceroyalties of Khan-i-jahan Bahadur (1688-1689), Ibrahim Khan (1689-1697) and Prince Azimus Shan (1697-1712), ended the hostilities with English. The English had secured the status of most favoured nation in Bengal and they gradually built up their military and political power.

The viceroyalty of Azimus-Shan lasted theoretically from 1697 to 1712. But practically it was ended in 1703. In 1703 he left Bengal appointing his son Farrukh Siyar as deputy subahdar. During this period (1703-1712) Bengal was dominated by the Diwan Murshid Quli Khan who ultimately became the subahdar of Bengal.

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[1] Manucci, Noccolao, Storia Do Mongor, tr. with Introduction and Notes by W. Irvine, vol. II, London, 1906-1908, p. 322, cited by Muhammad Mohar Ali in History of the Muslims of Bengal, vol. IA, op. cit., p. 446.

Bengal under the nawabs of murshidabad

Murshid Quli Jafar Khan (1704-1727 A.D.)

He was honest, efficient and just administrator, a man of extensive learning. He encouraged learning and paid great respect to men who were eminent for their piety and learning.[1] He strictly followed the rules of Shariat. Every day from morning to moon he engaged in copying the Quran and every year he sent Qurans of his own hand writing to Mecca, Medina and other holy places. He used to keep fast three months in a year and performed the five time prayers perfectly and carefully. He used to maintain above two thousand readers for reciting the Quran and other acts of devotion. During the time of famine and the shortage of grain in the market he used to make available all such things from the public's stores. His administration tended to the benifit of mankind and the glory of the Almighty Allah. He provided justice without any discretion or distinction between the rich and the poor and the Muslims and the non-Muslims. He was a remarkable fine penman and wrote with great elegance. He was also a great mathematician and used to scrutinize all accounts himself.

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1. History of Bengal from the first Mohammedan Invasion untill the Virtual Conquest of that Country by the English in A.D. 1757, op. cit., 408.

During the time of Murshid Quli Khan, there was a popular Zamindar at Birbhum Known as Asadulla. His ancestors were Hindus but he embraced Islam and became very strict follower of Shariat. This man dedicated half of his income to charitable purpose for the learned, pious, relieving the distresses of the poor and the needy.[1]

During the viceroyality of Azimus Shan, Murshid Quli Khan established a mosque, at the Begum Bazar area in Dhaka which is known after his name as mosque of Kartablab Khan.[2] The famous Katra Madrasah at Murshidabad was built by him in A.H. 1137/1723 A.D.[3] Another mosque at Katwa, Burdwan was also founded by him.[4]

Shuja-uddin Muhammad Khan (1727-1739 A.D.)

Though Murshid Quli Khan nominated his grand son, Sarfaraz Khan as his successor but his son-in-law, Shuja ud-Din was appointed Subahdar of Bengal by the order of the Imperial court for which he had applied to the court. He was

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1. Ibid, p. 371.
2. Syed Mahmudul Hasan, Dacca : The City of Mosques, Islamic Foundation, Bangladesh, 1981, p. 41.
3. L.S.S. O'Mally Bengal District Gazetteers, Murshidabad, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot Calcutta, 1914, pp. 212-213.
4. J.C.K. Peterson, Bengal District Gazetteers, Burdwan, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot Calcutta, 1910, p. 200.

a gallent soldier, munificent, affable in behaviour and religious in nature. He administered justice with strict unpartiality and paid great respect to men of learning and piety. He also provded necessary help to stangers. There was "not a man in his service whom he had not essentially obliged by some personal favours, and finding his dissolution at hand, he made a present of two months wages to every nobleman, every man, civil and military, and to every soldier or trooper in his service".[1]

He had a list of all the needy persons whom he personally knew and everynight before going to bed he "peruse it and to set down under some name such a sum of money, as he thought proper (and this was sometimes a large one)....After having in this manner promoted the benifit of a cetain number of persons he effaced their names, and noted down another set; and this sacred practice of his he kept on foot during the whole course of life."[2]

He completed one mosque which was left incomplete by one of his officials, Nazir Ahmad in the village of Dehpara on the bank of Bhagirathi. He laid out a beautiful garden named 'Farah Bagh' or 'Garden of Joy'. He also had his

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1. Gholam Hossein Khan, Seir Mutaqherin or Review of Modern Times (English translation) vol. I, Delhi, First printed in 1926, Reprinted in 1990. pp. 322-323.
2. Ibid, p. 325.

mausoleum built in this garden, near the mosque before his death and was buried there after his death.[1]

Sarfaraz Khan(1739 A.D. - 1740 A.D.)

After the death of Shujauddin Muhammad Khan, his son Sarfaraz Khan ascended the Masnad of Bengal. Alivardi Khan, deputy governor of Bihar, made a plot against Sarfaraz Khan and ultimately Killed him in a battle and captured the masnad.

According to Ghulam Husain Tabatabai, Sarfaraz Khan was "only a pious man, edicted to the practices of devotion and extremely regular in his stated prayers. He fasted three full months besides the blessed month of the Ramazan, and was scrupulous in the discharge of the several duties prescribed through out the year; but at the same time he proved greatly deficient in that keenness of discernment, and that extent of mind, so indespensably necessary in a Sovereign Prince, His soul wholly engrossed by those little practices of religion, did not pay a sufficient attention to the affairs of State, and did not reach to those niceties and those qualifications so necessary in a man of his station and rank."[2]

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1. Salim Allah, Tawarikh-i-Bangalah, Tr. by Francis Gladwin, A Narrative of the Transitions in Bengal, Calcutta, 1778, pp. 152-153.
2. Seir Mutagherin, vol. I, op. cit., p. 326.

Alivardi Khan (1740-1756 A.D.)

Alivardi Khan was a kind, generous and an ardent lover of learning. He extended his favours to those who helped him during his early days of adversity. He patronized men of letters. His court was adorned by many learnned scholars. They are Maulavi Nasir Ali Khan, his son Daud Ali Khan, Zakir Husain Khan, Mir Muhammad Alim, Zakir Husain Khan, Mir Muhammad Ali , Shah Muhammad Amin, Shah Adham, Hyat Beg. Sayyid Mir Muhammad Sajjad, and Qazi Ghulam Muzaffar.[1]

Alivardi Khan was very regular in religious affairs Every day he read aloud a chapter of the Quran. He used to spent his time in transacting the affairs of state and in the company of pious and leared persons. He was a "splendid general and a far-sighted statesman".[2] According to Yusuf Ali, "though Nawab took great interest in the literary pursuit of the poets and usually grasped the inner meanings of verses quite easily, he refrained from composing poetry himself."[3] It is said that he composed only a single line in praise of the holy prophet (P.B.U.H.) for which Yusuf Ali

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1. J.N. Sarkar, History of Bengal, vol., II,op. cit., p.448.
2. Riyazu-s-Salatin, op. cit., p. 362.
3. Yusuf Ali Khan, Zamima-i-Tadhkira-i-Yusufi, Persian Text edited with Notes and Introduction by Abdus Subhan, Aiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, 1978, p.11.

asserted that it is equal to a Diwan in excellence. Alivardi khan was very fond of the company of learned scholars. Abdur Rashid bin Abdul Ghafur who occupied a good position in his court prepared an Arabic-Persian dictionary, for Alivardi Khan. The dictionary named *Muntakhabu '1 Lughatu'l-Shahjahani*. This was one of the most popular Arabic-Persian dictionaries of India. It was inscribed for Nawab Alivardi Khan at Murshidabad which is evident from a note on the MSS, bearing the date of 8th Muharram, 1155/15th March 1742. The MSS. Copy is preserved in the India Office Library.[1]

Alivardi Khan also established Sitapur Endowment Madrasah in 1751 A.D. in Hughli.[2]

Sirajud-Daula (1756-1757)

After the death of Nawab Alivardi Khan, his maternal grandson and heir Siraj ud-Daula ascended to the throne in 1169/1756. During his period, at the battle of Plassy (1757 A.D.), Muslim regime came to an end and British supremacy was gradually established. After his death worst types of exploitations started by the British. Famine, pestilence and poverty grasped the country during this period. After the

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1. Ibid, p. 12.
2. Dr. Muhammad Shahidulla, *A Brief History of Madrasah Education in India*, Bani Book Stall, Calcutta, 1987, p. 173.

death of Siraj ud-Daula in 1757 the English enthroned Mir Jafar to the masnad of Bengal. He reigned for three years and then Mir Qasim, brother-in-law of Mir Jafar was appointed Governor of Bengal in 1760.

Mir Qasim (1760 - 1763)

Mir Qasim was a great patron of Islamic education. He honoured and rewarded men of merit and men of learning Whenever learned people come to see him, he used to get up and bend his head with utmost respect. He used to listen to his needs and granted whatever was possible. He also respected the pious men of his time like Shah Mahed Ali Hazin, Mir Mahmed Ali Fazil and Shah Mahmed Hasan. These persons were also very renouned for their knowledge and exemplary life. He extended regular payments to the troops and took every care to satisfy them. His exactitude and keenness were so dreaded that no one dared to empose a false muster upon him.

The ornaments that adorned the Serajud-Daula's Imambara melted into coins and this amount of several lacs was given to the Sayyids, to the needy people. According to Ghulam Husain Khan, "He was an incomparable man indeed, and the most extraordinary Prince of his age".[1]

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[1] Gholam Hossein Khan, Seir Mutaqherin, op. cit., vol II, p. 432.

The English again placed Mir Jafar on the masnad in 1763 who remained on his post upto his death in 1765 A.D. In this year (1765 A.D.) East-India company received from the Emperor Shah Alam, the appointement of Dewan of the three provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa by granting twenty four lacs of rupees annually.[1] After Mir Jafar, Nejim ud-daula (1765-1766), son of Mir Jafar; Sief ud-daula (1767-1769), brother of Nejim ud daula; Mubarik ud-Daula (1769-1792), brother of **Sief** ud Daula; Nazir ul Mulk (1792-1809), son of Mubarik ud daula became Nawab of Bengal. They became puppet in the hands of East India Company. Muhammad Raza Khan who was Deputy Nazim, was removed from his post by the English. The company acquired dominion over the three Subahs and had appointed Ziladars at various places. They made Calcutta had quarter (the court for crown land) and made assessments and collections of revenue, administration justice, and dismiss and appoint collectors of revenue and also performed other functions of the Nizamat.

During British rule Islamic learning was not so much hampared. It followed its own path. The Muslims were aware enough about their religious duties and education. They felt the necessity of Islamic education and tried to convince the

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[1] Ibid, vol. III, p. 9; Riyazu-s-Salatin, op,. cit., p. 395

British rulers for establishing more centres of Islamic learning. As a result more centres of Islamic learning were established by the British and nobles[1] at different parts of Bengal. These Institutions, inspite of many difficulties and financial problems continued for the educational advancement of the Muslims of Bengal. These centres of learning produced a great number of eminent scholars, spriritual guides, devoted preachers who solely devoted their lives for the cause of Islam and inspired the masses to lead a spiritual life and observance of the religious practice of Islam.

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[1] It has been discussed in Chapter II.

CHAPTER - II

RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS OF BENGAL IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS OF BENGAL IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

In the central Islamic lands education used to be imparted chiefly through four kinds of institution - mosque, maktab, halqas and Madrasah. The educational system in Muslim Bengal followed the same pattern and traditions because the Muslim rulers and their nobles originally belonged to the central Islamic lands and so brought with them similar ideas and notions. "As a result of Quranic injunction " ليتفقهوا فى الدين " that they should gain sound knowledge in religion, the elementary Madrasahs grew almost on the religious line. Since education began with the Holy Quran it was perhaps inevitable to select a sacred place, and the mosque was found to be more convenient for the purpose".[1] Mosques besides being places of worship were the centre of learning where teaching was offered in all branches of Islamic learning from the elementary stage to the highgest level. The imams of the mosques and other scholars and learned people used to teach in the mosque. Maktabs were intended for primary education Majalis or Halqas were developed around individual scholars where the bright and inquisitive students used to assemble for higher education in different fields of Islamic Studies - tafsir, hadith, fiqh, jurisprudence, literature, natural sciences etc. Madrasah came into existance as parallel institutions of higher education by the fifth century of Hijra. In this respect the most notable madrasah was Nizamiya madrasah of Baghdad, founded by Alp Arslan's Wazir, Nizam ul-Mulk in 457/1065. The madrasah there by supplemented, but never supplanted, the mosque as an educational institutions. "Gradually the madrasah acquired in practice a status of sanctity, not much inferior to that of the mosque and teachers and students moved freely from one to the other according to their inclination or needs".[1]

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[1] Muhammad Shahidullah, A Brief History of Madrasah Education in India, Bani Book Stall, Calcutta, 1987, p. 3.

Motijhil Madrasah Furqaniah

Nawazish Muhammad Khan, nephew and son-in-law of Nawab Alivardi khan built a madrasah (Furqaniah Darul Ulum) in Motijhil area (Murshidabad) in 1751.[2] He would personally supervise the madrasah during his life time. Arabic, Persian, Bengali, Urdu and English were taught there.

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1. A. L. Tibani, Arabic and Islamic Themes, London, 1976, p. 223.
2. Qalam Weekly, Calcutta, 10th July, 1994, p. 2.

A Jama mosque was built on the bank of the Jhil in 1743 A.D. by Nawazish Khan.[1] On the left hand side of the mosque lies the above mentioned madrasah and on its right hand side the palace of Nawazish Muhammad Khan. In front of the mosque lies tombs of Nawazish Khan, Ikram-ud-Daulah, younger brother of Siraj-ud-Daulah, and the chief commander, Shamsher Ali Khan. The students of this madrasah were provided with free fooding, lodging, books and other accessaries related to teaching. The madrasah still exists but it's condition is very poor.

The meaning of Motijhil is 'Pearl lake'. It is a long hourse-shoe shaped lake and contains seven hundred and fifty Bighas area.[2] Now there is one hundred and fifty students are studing at the Madrasah. Among them sixty five students are residential. Eight teachers are teaching there. Class rooms are not available in the Madrasah. So the balconi of the mosque and the mango garden of the Motojhil are used as class rooms. Due to economic problem the Madrasah was closed in A.D. 1976.[3] After some time it was re-started with the help of certain Hatem Ansari. Ushr, Zakat were the main sources to maintain the Madrasah. The Government earned several lacs rupees every year from this Motijhil lake but do not take interest about the Madrasah and mosque of the Motijhil.

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[1] L.S.S. O'Malley, Bengal District Gazetteers, Murshidabad, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, Calcutta, 1914, p.215.

[2] Ahmad Hasan Dani, Muslim Architecture in Bengal, Dacca, The Asiatic Society of Pakistan, 1961, p. 276.

[3] Qalam Weekly, Calcutta, 10th July, 1994, p.2.

Mosque of Kartalab Khan

Murshid Quli Khan was given the litle of Kartalab Khan by Emperor Aurangzeb for his efficiency in revenue adminstration. He was appointed Revenue administrator of Bengal by Aurangzeb. During the viceroyalty of Azimush-Shan, he built a mosque at Dhaka which is known, after his name, as Mosque of Kartalab Khan. This mosque is situated in the Begum Bazar area. It was constructed on a raised platform in the year 1700-04.[1] There are vaulted rooms underneath of which are now being used as shops. This attractive Mughal edifice is roofed over by five domes resting on octagonal drums. This mosque carries all the typical features of Mughal architecture such as bulbous dome, slender pinnacles, battlemented parapets, octagonal corner tower capped by cupolas. One interesting feature of the mosque is the do-chala or two regimented hut shaped structure which is used as the residence of the Imam.[2]

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1. Syed Mahmudul Hasan, Dacca: The City of Mosques, Islamic Foundation, Bangladesh, 1981, p. 41.
2. Sharifuddin Ahmed, Dhaka: Past Present Future, (edited), The Asiatic society of Bangladesh, Dhaka, 1991, p. 304

Mosque of Khan Muhammad Mirdha

There is an area in the north-Western side of famous Lalbagh fort called Atish Khan Mahalla. This magnificent mosque stands in splended isolation there.[1] It is known from the inscription that the mosque was built by Khan Muhammad Mirdha at the instance of ~~K~~Qazi Ibadullah during the reign of Emperor Aurangzeb in A.D. 1706. Most probably Khan Muhammad Mirdha was chief mason or architect.[2] It seems the mosque was built over the ruins of some Mandirs[3] as is clear by the inscription. The mosque is situated on a raised platform. The mosque is oblong in type, measuring forty eight feet by twenty feet with four octagonal corner towers. There are three doors on the eastern side and one door each on the northern and southern side. There is a madrasah on the north-west corner of the mosque. Maulana Asadullah used to teach students Logic, Philosophy and fiqh through the medium of Arabic and Persian at this mosque and used to receive a monthly stipend of rupees sixty from the local Nawabs. He died in 1750 A.D.[4]

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1. Dhaka: Past Present Future op. cit, p. 307.
2. Dacca: The city of Mosques, op. cit., p. 43.
3. A.K.M. Zakaria, Bangladesher Prachin Kirti, part III, Muslim Juya, Bangladesh Series, Dhaka, 1987, p. 77.
4. Saghir Hasan al Masumi, Bengal's Contribution to Islamic Learning, Journal of the Islamic Research Institute of Pakistan vol. VI, March, 1967, p.162.

Buhar Madrasah

The famous Buhar Madrasah and Library was an important institution in the eighteenth century . In connection with this library, the two eminent persons are worthy to be remembered. One is Sayyid Sadr-ad-din al-Din, the Mir Munshi of Waren Hastings and founder of the afore-mentioned library, the other one is Maulavi Sayyid Sadr-ad-din Ahmad al Musavi, who presented this library to the Imperial Library. So it is desirable to make a brief inquiry of these two historic personality.

Munshi Sadr-ad-din was born in a respectable Munshi family of Buhar. This Munshi or Sayyid family is said to be directly descended from the Prophet of Islam[1] through the seventh Imam, Imam Musa al Kazim. This Sayyid family was well Known for their piousness religiousness and devoutness. One of the member of this family, named Sayyid Shihab-ad-din came to India during the reign of Sultan Altamish (A.H. 607-633/A.D. 1210-1235). He is thought to be the ninth in descent from Imam Musa Kazim and the fifteenth from the prophet (P.B.U.H.)

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[1] Rawa'ih al Mustafa min Azhar al Murtaza, p. 405, cited by Prof. Hidayat Hussain, Frunders of Bahar Library, Islamic Culture, Hyderabad, vol. VII, Jan,1933, p. 125.

Sayyid Sadr-ad-din, son of Sayyid Muhammad Sadiq and founder of Buhar Madrasah passed a very eventful life. Before the battle of Plassey, he worked for some time as a clerk under Holwell in Calcutta and he is thought to be the first Bengali Muslim to serve under the British.[1]

When he was studying at Murshidabad he was acquainted with Mir Muhammad Jafar Ali Khan and both of them studied under the same tutor. When Mir Jafar was elevated to Masnad of Murshidabad, he was appointed as Munshi. Subsequently he hold the post of Mir Munshi, Madar-ul-Maham of the Nizamat. He was so trustworthy that he never exposed anything which was confided in him, even at the point of loaded pistols. Because of this trustfulness and sincerety he became the bossom friend of Mir Jafar Mir Jafar appoined him Ataliq (Tutor) to his son Nawab Najim-ad-daula, he extended his full support to him till his (Nawab's) death

During the reign of Nawab Saif-ad-Daula, he was also an important figure

At the time of Mubarak-ad-Daula, his enimies prevailed upon Nawab and tried to execute him but fortunately he escaped and his properties were confiscated At last Sadruddin got political asylum under Mr John Graham, collector of Mednapur. He recommended him to Mr. Barwell collector of Burdwan. By dint of his erudition, he ultimately became the Mir Munshi of Warren Hastings, the then Governor-General. He also became Darugha of all the Adalats. During this time he played an important role in the transfer of Diwani from Nawabs of Murshidabad to East India company. Lord Cornwallis utilized the services of Sadr-ad-din in the Decennial Settlement of Bengal. The Aimma lands were also settled by Sadr-uddin. The Governor-General was so much pleased with him for the services that he was offered the Jaigir of the Parganas of Baharband as a reward.[1] He also enjoyed the favour of Shah Alam, the Emperor of Delhi (A.H. 1173-1221/A.D.1759-1806) who appointed him Mutawalli (Trustee) of the Bais Hazari Parganah in the district of Malda, Dinajpur and RajShahi. This Bais Hazari Parganah is an Waqf Estate of the eminent saint Sayyid Shah Jalal-ud-din Tabrizi (D.A.H. 642/A.D. 1244) Who came to Pandua in Bengal during 7th century of Hijrah[2]. Sadr-ad-Din was a very learned and pious man. He built several mosques and rest houses where travellers were treated free of cost. He constructed a large mosque at Buhar in 1187 A.H./1773 A.H.,[3] which has still been existing there. The tombs of Sadr ad-Din, his two wives and his little child are also attached to the mosque. He died in A.H./1211/A.D. 1796[1]. One of his greatest achievements was the establishment of Buhar Madrasah in 1775[2], later on he also built a magnificient library attached to the Madrasah. He named this library as Kutub Khana Jalalia Buhar. To commemorate the name of his guru, Jalal-ud-din Tabrizi, he named it Jalalia.[3] The Madrasah diffused the light of oriental education in Bengal. Students from different parts of Asia used to assemble there to get education. About eight hundred students used to get fooding and lodging free of cost. Most of the Judges of Bengal appointed in different capacities at that time were indebted to Buhar Madrasah for their education.

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[1] Ibid, p. 126

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[1] Ibid, p. 128.

[2] The Calcutta Review, Calcutta, New Series, Vol-4, No. 3, Sept, 1922, pp. 502-503.

[3] Ibid, p. 503.

Maulana Abd-ul-Ali of Lucknow was appointed the Principal to this Madrasah. The Madrasah attained wide reputation under his principalship.[4] He was popularly known as Bahr-ul-Ulum because of his profound knowledge. The

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1. Islamic Culture, op. cit., p. 130.
2. Ibid; The Calcutta Review, op. cit., p. 503.
3. Maulavi Qasim Hasir Radavi, revised and compiled by Maulavi Abdul Muqtadir Khan Saheb, Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts in the Buhar Library, Calcutta, 1921, Preface.
4. The Calcutta Review, op. cit., p. 503.

expenditure for maintaining this library as well as Madrasah was provided by the income of Bais Hazari Parganas.[1]

Maulvi Sadr-ad-din, great grandson of Munshi Sadr-ad-din was a great scholar and had a profound aptitude for oriental learning. He himself compiled Rawa'ih-al-Mustafa min Azhar al-Murtaza, a biography of Prophet's descendants and edited Nasaiz-al-Khasais. His another work entitled Al-Murtaza, biography of Ali Bin Abi Talib, remain unpublished.[2]

How large the Buhar Library was at the time of Munshi Sadr-ad-din, was not known but when Maulvi Sadr-ad-din took up the charge of the Library it contained only one hundred manuscript and some printed books.[3] The Library made a tremendous progress at the time of Maulvi Sadr-ad-din. By 1905 he collected four hundred sixty eight Arabic Manuscript, four hundred eighty three Persian Manuscripts, One Turkish Manuscript and one Urdu Manuscript, besides about nine hundred and fourty Arabic, four hundred Persian, one hundred and fourty Urdu books, printed or lithographed.[4]

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1. Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts in the Buhar Library, op. cit, Preface.
2. Islamic cultur, op.cit, p. 132.
3. Catalogue of Persian Manuscripts in the Buhar Library, op. cit, Preface.
4. Ibid; The Calcutta Review, op. cit., p. 504.

Moulvi Sadr-ad-din was a far sighted fellow. He did realise that if the Library remains confined at Buhar, in the course of time it may get extinct, so to save it from extinction and to make this library of rare collections availabel for the use of the coming generation of Arabic and Persian scholars, he acceded to the proposals offered by Lord Curzon, who wanted to convert the Calcutta Public Library into an Imperial Library. Lord Curzon personally went to Buhar and persuaded Maulvi Sadr-ad-din to donate his library to the Imperial Library. So an agreement was signed between Sadr-ad-din and the then Secretary of state for India on the 22nd August 1904.[1] According to this agreement, the original name of this library, "The Buhar LIbrary" is still being maintained and it is housed in a separate chamber in Metcalfe Hall in Calcutta.

Two illuminated manuscripts one the Quran written in a beautiful minute Naskh by the Emperor Aurangzeb in A.H. 1099 and the other one a copy of the Panj Surah written in a learned Naskh in gold by the prince Dara Sikoh are kept in the custody of the Trustee of the Victoria Memorial Hall as per the agreement.

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[1] *Islamic culture*, op. cit, p. 132; *Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts in the Buhar Library*, op.cit. Preface.

The Persian manuscript is one of the most valuable possessions of the Library. Moulvi Hasib first started to catalogue them but finishing touch was given by Jonab Khan Saheb Abdul Muqtadir. He was a famous cataloguer. On finding the manuscripts very old and original, he prepared a descriptive catalogue named Catalogue Raissonne in 1921. In modern times these catalogues seemed to be inadequate, back dated and misleading. So Mr. S.M. Hasan, deputy librarian, prepared a very useful language index to supply a very upto-date information of the manuscripts, but he couldn't finish it. The unfinished work of Mr. S.M. Hasan was completed by Shaikh Mazharul Islam, the present Assistant Librarian of the Arabic and Persian department.

Moulvi Abdul Khayr Muhammad Yusuf, the clerk-in-charge of the Buhar Library from July 1905 to oct. 1906 started to prepare a catalogue for Arabic manuscripts. His successor Mualvi Qasim Hasir Radavi who hled the post from 1906-1909 prepared notices of most of the Persian manuscripts. After him, the next clark-in-charge was a very good scholar but he had no aptitude required for cataloguing. So the work of cataloguing remained suspended for some time. In December 1914, the Secretory of State for India conferred responsibility of this work on Moulvi HidayatHusain, Prof of Arabic and Persian at the Presidency collage, Calcutta.

The Calcutta Madrasah

The Calcutta Madrasah is a pioneer institute in the history of Muslim education in India since the beginning of the British rule. It ranks as the first educational institute established in India by the British government[1] and was founded in 1780 by Warren Hastings, the first Governor-general of the East India company, at the request of the Muslim elite in Calcutta. His object was to promote the study of Arabic and Perssian languages and of the Mohamedan law among the sons of the Muslim gentry to make them competent for responsible jobs in the various departments of the British administration.

The Madrasah was first started in a rented building at Baithakhhana near Sealdah. A piece of land was purchased at Padmapukur area to erect a new building for the college in 1781. All the expenses of the construction and the monthly cost of the Madrasah were defrayed by the Governor-general from his personal purse untill 1782 and afterwards he was reimbursed by the company. In 1785 "certain lands and villages in 24-Pargana were assigned for the support of the Institution and a sanad (deed) made out for them in the name of the preceptor or principal. This lands were called the Madrassa Mahal".[1]

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[1] The Bengal Education Code, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, Calcutta, 1931, p. 296.

Due to unhealthy atmosphere the Madrasah was shifted to a more suitable locality now known as Wellesley Square . The foundation stone was laid by William Pitt Amherst, Governor-general of British India. The Madrasah was shifted to this new building in Auguest 1827.[2]

Maulana Majdood-din was appointed as the Head preceptor and was also given the charge to look after the internal affairs. He used to teach purely religious subjects like Hadith, Tafsir, Islamic Jurisprudence, and Islamic Philosophy up to Fazil.[3] Maulana Majdood-din was a disciple of Maulana Nizamuddin, the founder of the Dars-i-Nizamiya System of Madraasah education. He (Maulana Majdood-din) introduced *Dars-i-Nizamiya* syllabus in this Madrasah. In course of time changes occured in the curriculum of the Madrasah and it adopted its own syllabus. Known as *Dars-i-*

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1. A.M. Monteath, *Note on the State of Education in India*, Selections from Educational Records of the Government of India, Delhi, vol. I, 1960, p. 233.

2. *Bengal Past and Present*, vol. VIII, 1912, Journal of the Calcutta Historial Society, Calcutta, 1907, p. 94.

3. Justice S.A. Masud, *Calcutta Madrasah - its Past, Present, and Future*, Calcutta Madrasah College Bicentenary Celebration Souvenir, Calcutta, 1985,

Alia.[1] All the Madrasahs in India followed the system of Calcutta Madrasah and it enjoyed the unique status of an affiliating and Examining body.

In 1791, Maulana Majdood-din was replaced by one Maulana Muhammad Israil as he was accused of irregularity and mismanagement.[2] In this year committee of superintendence was formed, some rules and regulations were framed up for smooth management of the Madrasah.

In 1795, the Zaminder of Nadia Raja Iswarchandra assarted his claim to the proprietor right of the Madrasah Mahal and an inquiry also proved his claim to be justified, so the whole Madrasah Mahalwas handed over to Zaminder in 1800 and since this time the whole financial responsibility of the Madrasah came to the shoulder of the Government. The office of the head preceptor came from Md. Israil to Maulavi Mohiuddin. On his death it passed to Maulana Ameenullah. His perfection was so satifactory that the Governor-General in Council provided him gratuity of Rs. 5000, and with a Khelaut of investiture into that office. According to the recommendation of Madrasah committee for its better management Captain Irvine of the 4th Native Infantry was appointed to the post of secretory and Maulavi Md. Sa'ar to the post of Head preceptor in July 1819. This time Governement sunctioned a sum of Rs. 30,000 per annum from the public treasury for the maintenance of the Madrasah.

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[1] *A Brief History of Madrasah Education in India*, op, cit, 1987, p. 15.

[2] Azizar Rahman Mallick, *British Policy and the Muslims in Bengal* (1757-1856), Dacca, 1961, p. 176.

A library respectable of Arabic and Persian works was established as per recommendation of the committee of superintendence. First annual examination of the Madrasah was held in the Town Hall on the 15th August, 1821 in presence of many honourable and distinguished persons in Calcutta, despite the opposition from the preceptors and the students. This examination is said to be the first public examination held in British India[1]. The results, however, were satisfactory.

In 1823, as per advice of John Adam, successor of Lord Hastings a general committee of public Instruction was formed to inspect the state of public education in this part of India. This committee, according to proposals of Madrasah committee, used to manage the affairs of Madrasah through a sub-committee. This subcommittee assisted by a secretory. The Madrasah committee appointed Hafez Ahmed Kabir in 1823 as an

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[1] A Brief History of Madrasah Education in India, op. cit., p. 15

Indian assistant to the Secretory (Dr. Lumsden). Hafez Ahmed Kabir held the post of Khateeb of the **Madrasah** Mosque for twelve years.

In an attempt to extend the facilities of Medical treatment among the Muslims, the British rulers introduced medical classes in the Madrasah in 1827. Dr. Breton, the Professor of Medicine was asked to supply medical treatments and skeletons for the use of Medical classes. An Anatomical work by Mr. Tytler was translated into Arabic for the medical classes. The medical classes continued in the Madrasah till the establishment of Medical college in 1836.

The British authorities tried several times to introduce English classes in the Madrasah in 1826, 1829 and in 1833. They adopted various means by making the attendance compulsory or by increasing the stipends for the English classes but still they failed.

In 1837 they abolished Persian and introduced English as official language. They made another attempt in 1839 by starting Anglo-Arabic department but still they could not succeed. The reason of their failure is obvious. The Muslim in Bengal considered that learning of English might injure their religious belief and also it was an additional burden to the students.

In 1842 the General Committee of Public Instruction was abolished and Council of Education was established .

In 1850, as per suggestion of the Council Dr. Alloys Sprenger, an eminent oriental scholar was appointed principal of the Madrasah college and the designation of the preceptor was changed to Head professor or 'Modarris-i-Awwal'.

In 1851, Dr. Sprengar tried to make some changes into the studies and discipline of the Institution which resulted in discord between the principal and the students. Some changes were made in 1854. Anglo-Arabic Department was abolished and in its place Anglo-Persian Department was established under the control of the Principal and the Arabic Department was solely devoted to the college. The Anglo-Persian Department was upto the standard of senior English scholarship. Another branch school was started at this time for the Muslim boys of lower classes.

The year 1857 is very important in the History of Indian Education because in this year the Calcutta University was established. Now the Calcutta Madrasah college came under the Calcutta University. Anglo-Persian Department was affiliated to the Calcutta University in 1866 upto F.A. class.

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In 1857 Sepoy Mutiny took place and the british rulers considered it to be the last attempt of the Muslim to regain power. Since this time, the British rulers began to nurse hatred and suspicion to the Muslims, so the Muslim had to pay greater penalty for this revolt. Many students of the madrasah were activily involved in the revolt. So the British authority considered the Madrasah to be a "Nursery of disaffection". In view of this suspicion the then Lt. Governor of Bengal Mr. F. Halliday sought the openion of W.N. Lees, the then Princiapl of the Madrasah about the benifit in maintaining the Institution at Government's cost. Principal W.N. Lees reviewed the matter politically, educationally and economically and submitted a detailed report in which he suggested some reform rather than the abolition of the Madrasah. Inspite of that, Lt. Governor in 1858 recommended that Arabic Department should be abolished, the Anglo-Persian Department should be retained and Arabic professorship should be attached to the Calcutta University. But the India Government was opposed to this proposal. So no remarkable changes took place in the Madrasah.

In 1869 a committee was formed to enquire into the condition and management of the Madrasah. C.H. Campbell, Commissioner of the Presidency Division, I. Suitchiffe, principal of the Presidency College and Maulavi Abdul Latif, a Deputy magistrate were on the committee. According to their suggestion again in 1871 a Madrasah committee was formed. Justice Norman was appointed as President and Nawab Abdul Latif as Secretory in the Committee At this time the system of producing Sharafatnama at the time of admission was abolished, Mohsin fund was exclusively employed for the Muslim students and three new Madrasah at Dhaka, Rajshahi and Chita gong were established out of this fund[1].

In 1882 Hunter Commission was appointed to review the education system of India. At this time some reforms were made in the Madrasah in 1884.

In 1896 Elliot Hostel was established for the Madrasah students. In 1902 Muslim Institute was founded and the principal of the Madrasah became ex-officio President and Treasurer of the Institute.

In 1909, as per suggestion of Arle Conference Title class was opened and some important change in the syllabi were made at the time.

In 1915 almost all Madrasahs adopted a new scheme drawn up by Shamsul Ulama Abu Naser Waheed of Dhaka Madrasah and sanctioned by the Governement. But the Calcutta Madrasah didn't accept these new scheme. They retained the traditional scheme known as Dars-i-Nizami. In subsequent years many new High and Junior High Madrasahs were established. Three Islamic Instermediate colleges were started in the three division of East Bengal in 1920.

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[1] Muhammad Moniruzzaman, History of Calcutta Madrasah, Calcutta Madrasah College Bicentenary Celebration Souvenir, Calcutta, 1985.

In 1927 Shamsul Ulama Kamaluddin Ahmad was appointed Principal of the Calcutta Madrasah. This year "Board of Central Madrasah Examination" was established to conduct various examination of the Old Scheme Senior Madrasahs namely Alim,. Fazil and Mumtazul Muhaddethin. The Principal, Kamaluddin Ahmad was appointed ex-officio Registrar and Vice President of the Board. "Board of Central Madrasah Examintnation" was converted into "Bengal Madrasah Education Board" as per recommendation of Moazzam Husain Committee.

In 1947, due to partition of the country every thing became topsyturvy. Dhaka university and many High Madrasahs and Islamic Intermediate colleges under it came under East Pakistan. According to the decission of Separation Council, all the movable properties including Library of the Calcutta Madrasah was tranferred to Dhaka Madrasah on 10th August, 1947. "The Bengal Madrasah Education Board" was also shifted to Dhaka. So a large number of old and Reformed Scheme High

Madrasahs and the Hooghly Islamic Intermediate College became orphan without any central control.

In 20th Februrary, 1948 West Bengal Government set up West Bengal Madrasah Examination Board in Hooghly to conduct High Madrasah, Islamic Intermediate, Alim and Fazil Examinations in 1948 and 1949. The Principal of Hooghly Islamic Intermediate College was appointed its ex-officio Registrar.

The 4th April, 1949 is a fortunate date to the Muslim of West Bengal. On this very date, due to persistent demands of the leading Muslims of West Bengal and kind interference of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the Calcutta Madrasah restarted with new zeal and spirit, Mr Wajahat Hussain was appointed the principal. The Board from Hooghly was again transferred to the Calcutta Madrasah and its principal became ex-officio Registrar and Vice-president. Maulana Sayyid Ali Barkati served as officer-in-charge from 1964 to 1967. At his time he introduced Mumtazul Fuqaha course for the first time after partition.

Professor A.J.A. Tyeb came as a principal from Barasat Government College in Sept. 1971. During his time, students were allowed to write answere scripts in Bengali upto Fazil class and Fazil-passed students were also allowed to take admission in P.U./H.S. classes. At his time, west Bengal Madrasah Education Board was reconstituted and separated from Calcutta Madrasah College. After the reconstitution the Principal, Calcutta Madrasah College became an ex-officio member of the Board and Calcutta Madrassah College with its Title classes came under this Madrasah Board. "In its career of about two centuries, the Madrasa has seen great ups and downs and freqent changes in its curriculum. Prior to independence, a new curriulum was introduced in the Islamic schools of Bengal which prepared students for High Madrasa and Islamic Intermediate, equivalent to the Matriculation and Intermediate Examinations of the Calcutta University, with provision for such subjects as English language, Mother-tongue, Geography, Islamic History, Arabic Literature, Theology, etc. making them eligible for admission to the Bachelor of Arts classes. This was distinct from the old pattern of Junior and Senior Courses, under which instruction was given in Islamic Law, Arabic Language and Literatre, Grammer and Syntax, Logic, etc. in a six-year term leading to the Junior Course, and in Quranic Commentary, Tradition, Islamic law and its principles, Arabic Literature, Islamic History, Logic, Philosophy, etc., for another two years for the Senior Course. Those doing the Senior Course could go in for specialization-Title examination in their Traditional Science or Islamic Law which was a two years course. Under this curriculum, too, provision was made for the teaching of English, Mother-tongue, Ggeography etc".[1]

Professor Md. Shahidullah, present prencipal of the Calcutta Madrasah was appointed to the post on 18th July, 1983. At his initiative, permission was accorded by W.B.M.E. Board to write answer in M.M. and M.F. examination in Bengali. He had introduced Mumtazul Udaba course for the first time in Calcutta Madrasah College in 1983. This course is equivalent to the course of M.A. (Arabic) of Calcutta University.

Mosque at Inchlabazar

Inchlabazar is in the district of Burdwan. This place is also famous as Malka Noorjhan once resided there.[2] There is a famous mosque which has grown shabby with age. The mosque represents the earlier architecture of Bengal. It is a square brick structure of simple design with gently curved cornice and peculiar form of curvilinear roof.

The inscription of the mosque written in persian

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1. Ziyaud-Din A. Desai, Centres of Islamic Learning in India, Publication Division, Ministry of Informatin and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1978, p. 49-50.

2. S. Ahmad, The Inscriptions of Bengal, Rajshahi, vol. IV, 1960, p. 293.

language in Nastaliq character, states that it was built by Sayyid Tahir in 1115 A.H. or 1703 A.D.[1]

Lalbagh Shahi Masjid

This mosque was built in the early part of 18th century (1703-06) by Farrukh Siyar, deputy viceroy of Bengal. It is also known as Farrukh Siyar's mosque. The mosque is situated to the south of the southern gate of the Lalbagh fort. Farrukh Siyar couln't complete it, as he had to leave Bengal for Delhi. This mosque was very large, measuring 164 ft by 54 ft, which could accommodate 1500 worshipers at a time.[2] It was first renovated by Abdul Gani, Nawab of Dhaka in the last part of 19th century and last renovated in 1975.[3]

Katra Masjid

Ghani

The ruins of Katra Masjid is situated two miles to the east of Murshidabad Railway station. Katra literally means market. At the fag end of his life, Murshid Quli Khan decided to build a market and to construct a mosque and his tomb in its centre. The most faithfull and trusted person of

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1. Abdul Karim, Corpus of the Arabic and Persian Inscriptions of Bengal, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Dhaka, 1991, p. 483.
2. Bangladesher Prachin Kirti. op. cit, P 77.
3. Dacca : The City of Mosques, op. cit., 42.

Murshid Quli Khan, Murad Faras was given the charge to translate the decision into action. The mosque was built in 1137 A.H./ 1723 A.D.[1]. Which is evidence from the inscription over the door way. It is reported that Murad adopted many unfair means to construct this mosque. He forcibly collected material of that mosque from the contempory Zamindars of Bengal and by destroying some Hindu temples.[2] The mosque exactly resembles Kartalab Khan's mosque in Dhaka. The mosque stands on a high platform in the centre of a square courtyard measuring 166' each side. Four octagonal minars were built at the four corners of the quadrangle. Two of these minars are still existing, one at the north west corner and the other at the south-west corner. The courtyard is surrounded by a double storied row of rooms. Some of these rooms are still existing in a delapidated condition. These rooms are said to have been used by those who used to recite Quran in the mosque.[3]

The proper mosuqe is rectagonal in shape measuring 130' by 24' with four octagonal corner minerates. The entrance of

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1. L. S. S. O' Malley, Bengal Distric Gazetteers, Murshidabad, Calcutta, 1914, p. 214.
2. Ibid, p. 213; Pratibha Mitra, Oitihasic Murshidabad, A guid to Historic Murshidabad, Khagra, Murshidabad,1968, p. 16; Ahmad Hasan Dani, Muslim Architecture in Bengal, The Asiatic society of Pakistan,Dacca, 1961, p. 275.
3. Oitihasic Murshidabad, op. cit., p. 16.

this mosque is on the eastern side and below the staircase of the entrance, there is a under-cell where lies buried Murshid Quli Khan.[1] The style of the construction more or less resembles Mughal architecture.

Qadam Mubarak Mosque

The inscription of the mosque shows that it was built by a Fauzdar of Chittagong, named Muhammad Yasin Khan, in 1719. The mosque still retains its original features. This oblong structure is situated on a platform at Rahamatgong area of Chittagong city.

The mosque contains the Qadam mubarak or foot print of the prophet (P.B.U.H.).[2] That is why it has been so named *The mosque is said to possess the foot print of Hazrat* Abdul Qader Jilani also.[3]

Begum Masjid

This mosque stands at Naginabagh in the Lalbagh subdivision of Murshidabad district, near Sarfaraz Khans palace. This mosque is variously attributed to the wife and

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1. Muslim Architecture in Bengal, op. cit., p. 276.
2. Nazimuddin Ahmed, Discover the Monuments of Bangladesh, edited by John Sanday, The University Press Limited, Dhaka,1984, p. 188.
3. Bangladesher Prachin Kirti, op. cit. p. 201.

mother of Sarfaraz Khan. An inscription on it bears a date corresponding to 1136 A.H./1723-24 A.D.[1]

Qutub Saheb Masjid

The mosque is situated at Chhoto Pandua, Hughli. It was named after a famous saint, Shah Qutb al-Din who came from Bhagalpur and settled at Pandua. The inscription tablet which was discovered by H. blochmann, records that the mosque was constructed by Fath Khan, Son of Shuja Afghan Sur in 1140 A.H. or 1727 A.D.[2] in the reign of Emperor Muhammad Shah. The Mosque is like the second Kaba.

Armanitala Mosque

It is situated on Sarat Chandra Chakravarti Road, Dhaka. It was built by the wife of Khanjani in 1735 A.D.[3] The mosque is covered entirely with a chau-chala vault. "The chau-chala vaulted roof of these mosques is suggested to have been development from the North Indian pyramidal type noticed over the facade of Akbar's tomb at Sikandra (1612-13) near Agra, as well as over Itimad-ud-Daula's tomb (1628)

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1. Abdul Karim, Corpus of the Arabic and Persian Incriptions of Bengal, 1992, p. 492.
2. S. Ahmad, Inscriptions of Bengal, op. cit, vol IV, 1960, p. 298.
3. Bangladesher Prachin Kirti, op. cit. p. 86.

at Agra"[1]. This chau-chala vault is of Bengali origin and derived from chauchala huts of the land. Though the mosque is small (400 sq feet) but very beautiful.

Phuti Masjid

This is one of the largest mosques at Murshidabad.[2] It was built by Nawab Sarfaraz Khan at Kumrapur, Murchidabad. It seems that this huge mosque could not be completed as it's domes are still unfinished.[3] Most probably it was interrupted by Sarfaraz Khan's death. It is said that the mosque was built in a single night.[4]

Baliaghata Mosque

There is a mosque in the village of Baliaghata under the jurisdiction of Jangipur Subdivision of Murshidabad. It is known from the inscription of the mosque which is written partly in Arabic and partly in Persian that the mosque was built by one Sayyid Qasim in the year 1155 A.H./1742 A.D.

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[1] Dhaka: Past Present Future, op. cit., p. 324.

[2] L.S.S. O'Malley, Bengal District Gazetteers, Murshidabad, op. cit., p. 214.

[3] Ibid, pp. 214-215.

[4] P.C. Majumdar, The Musnud of Murshidabad (1704-1904), Murshidabad, 1905, p. 158.

[1] The mosque looks like the Kaba.

Mahinagar Mosque

The mosque stands at Mahinagar, not far from Murshidabad town, under Asanpur police station. The mosque as revealed from inscription, was founded by a famous person, named Wasil Muhammad, at the time of Mir. Muhammad Jafar Khan, during the reign of Mughal Emperor Alamgir II, in 1173 A.H./1759-60 A.H.[2]

Kadam Rasul Mosque

This mosque is situated about a quarter of a mile to the south of Katra Masjid. It is so called because it contains a much venerated stone which bears the foot impression of Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H). The stone is said to have been brought from Gaur. This mosque was founded by the chief eunuch of Mir Jafar Khan in 1782.[3]

Wali Khan's Mosque

Wali Khan built this mosque in 1790 A.D.[4] The mosque stands on the east of Chittagong Medical College at

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1. Inscriptions of Bengal, op. cit., p. 301.
2. Corpus of the Arabic and Pesian Inscriptions of Bengal, op. cit., p. 505.
3. L.S.S. O'Malley, Bengal District Gazetteers, Murshidabad, op. cit., p. 214.
4. Dicover the Monuments of Bangladesh, op. cit., p. 187.

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Chaumohani area.

Phundan Mosque

This three domed mosque, as is evident from the inscription, was built by on Musammad Phundan, a lady of English Bazar in 1208 A.H./1794 A.D. The mosque is located at Mahalla Chok Qurban Ali in English Bazar, Malda. It is said that the verses of inscription were composed by Ghulam Husain Salim, auther of Riyazu-s-Salatin.[1]

The Mosque Gharbi

The mosque Gharbi is located in the vicinity of Berhampore in Murshidabad district. It is known from the Persian inscription on the mosque that it was built by on Faqir Talib in 1212 A.H./1797 A.D.[2] Faqir Talib was a mystic, and used to preach Islam and Islamic teachings.

Silapur Madrasah

According to Narendra Nath Law, "towards the end of the eighteenth century there were some educational institutions

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[1] Corpus of the Arabic and Persian Inscriptions of Bengal op, cit, p. 512; Abid Ali Khan, Bengali Translation of Memoris of Gour and Pandua, translated and edited by Chaudhury Shamsur Rahman, Bangla Academy, Dhaka, 1985, p. 156.

[2] Chinmay Dutt, Catalogue of Arabic and Persian Inscriptions in the Indian Museum, Calcutta, Calcutta, 1967, p. 46; Inscriptions of Bengal, op.cit., p.306.

Muslims

at Silapur in Bengal. Here both Hindus and Muhammadans were taught Persian and Arabic".[1]

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The above is the contribution of muslim rulers, ulema and others in bringing up the religious institutions in Bengal which played an important role in spreading Islam and Islamic rituals in the region.

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[1] N.N. Law, Promotion of Learning in India, London, 1916, p. 113.

CHAPTER - III

THE SUFIS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

THE SUFIS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Before the inception of Islam in Bengal, the original religion of the people was idolatory. There were a number of idols worshiped in different parts of the land. Due to certain religious struggles, the socio-religious condition was worsening. Islam has always become a challenging force to irreligious activities and especially to idolation. When the condition in Bengal was deteriorating, a large number of ul~~e~~ama and sufi saints came to its rescue with preachings of Islam as their ideals.

It will not be out of place to give a brief introduction of these reformers who struggled in Bengal to show the people the right way, which was Islam and only Islam. As sufi teachings are based on Islam and also the sufis have played a major role in spread of Islam, a few of these personalities are to be refered here. Moreover sufi thoughts are part of Islamic Studies hence the study of the following sufis of Bengal is taken up.

Hazrat Shah Abdur Rahim Shahid

Hazrat Shah Abdur Rahim Shahid weas born in 1661. He came to Dhaka from Kashmir via Murshidabad in order to preach Islam and drew people towards Naqshbandi Silsilah.[1] He had a large number of disciples. His spiritual preceptor was sufi Hedayatullah. He died in 1745.

Shah Sufi Amanatullah

He was a disciple and successor of Shah Sufi Abdur Rahim, belonged to Naqshbandi Silsila.[2] His khanqah was in Dhaka where he preached Islam. His tomb is at Mohalla Maidan Mia Saheb. He died at the second half of eighteenth century.

Sayyid Muhammad Dayem

Sayyid Muhammad Dayem, an inhabitant of Chittagong, a descendant of Hazrat Sayyid Bakhtiya Mahi Sawar of Azimpura, a follower of Naqshbandi Sufi oirder, was a spiritual disciple of Shah Sufi Amanatullah.[3] For further spiritual advancement he went to Hazrat Munayim Pakbaz in Patna. After spending some years there, he came back to Mohalla Azimpura in Dhaka and finally settled there. He had a large number of disciples throughout Bengal and had a very big Khanqah where many students were provided with free lodging and fooding for academic pursuits. In course of

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1. Shaikh Muhammad Ekram, Rood-i-Kausar, Taj Company, Delhi, 1987, pp. 510-511.
2. Ibid, p. 511.
3. Ibid.

time, the Khanqah transformed into a great centre of learning. He was a very strict follower of shariat. He died in A.D. 1799.

Khwaja Anwar Shah

No detail about this saint is available. His tomb is in Burdwan and through the inscription on the epitaph it is found that his tomb was built by Farrukh Shah, Emperor of Delhi. He died in a battle in A.H. 1127 /A.D. 1715[1].

Qazi Muwakkil

He was the chief justice of Delhi during the reign of Aurangzeb (1659-1707), but having been disgusted with the behaviour fo the Empress, he not only resigned the post but also renounced the world for the attainment of spiritual perfection (Kamaliyat) and spreading Islam among the people[2]. He at last came to Chittagong and on finding the place suitable for him, permanantly settled there. His tomb is situated on the northern bank of an old tank called Gobaliadighi, situated to the east of thana Mir Sarai of Chittagong.

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[1] Muhammad Enamul Haque Rachanavali compiled and edited by Monsur Musa, Dhaka, 1991, pp. 127-128.

[2] Muhammad Enamul Haque, A History of Sufism in Bengal, The Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Dhaka, 1975, p. 259.

Shah Umar

The famous saint was one of the twelve Awliya in Chittagong. He preached Islam in the southern part of this district. The shrine of this great missionary is situated, in a small village on the east of thana Chakariya.

Another great Persian saint Umar Shah by name came to Noakhali district. According to local tradition this saint used to live in a boat and show many miracles. A large number of Hindus were converted to Islam by him, which has been supported even by Hindu historians. He gave his name to the Pargana, and it was at his instance that the emperor Muhammad Shah setted it with two brothers of Delhi, Amanullah and Sanaullah Khan at the very low revenue of Rs. 289.[1] The tomb of this saint exists in the parganah Umarabad of Noakhali district.

According to Dr. Enamul Haque, Umar Shah of Noakhali and Shah Umar of Chittagong are the same person. If they are same person, they were alive during the first half of eighteenth century. But according to local people of

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1. J. E. Webster, Eastern Bengal and Assam District Gazetteers, Noakhali, Allahabad, 1911, p. 101.

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Chittagong Shah Umar came there "some three or four hundred years ago".[1]

Hazrat Noor Muhammad Nizampuri

Hazrat Noor Muhammad Nizampuri was a great sufi. He was born in an aristocratic family at Dandira village in Noakhali district of Bangladesh, nearly in the mid half of eighteenth century.[2] His father Shaikh Muhammad Panah was said to be the descendant of the Emperor of G$\overset{h}{\wedge}$azni . That he would be a great sufi in latter life, was reflected from his early activities. Having received early education from his father, he left his village for Alia Madrasah in Calcutta for higher education, the then only Institution for higher studies.

He was endowed with all the properties that make a man great. He was always conscious of his duties and responsibilities, kept himself busy with social service. He used to perform every religious duty perfectly and recite from Quran every night regularly. He led a very simple life. One night Prophet Muhammad(peace be upon him) appeared in

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1. A History of Sufism in Bengal, op. cit., p. 257.
2. Nada-e-Islam, edited and published by Ashraf Husain, 45 year, 5 & 6th Sankha, Vadra-Asbhin, 1398 (in Bengali Calender), p. 81.

his dream and instructed him to become murid of Syed Ahmed Barelvi (1786-1831). Next morning he immediately carried out the instruction of the prophet. At that time Barelvi was engaged in a movement to bring back self confidence and spirit of freedom in the Muslims and Hazrat Nizampuri took - active part in this movement and even participated in the battle of Balacot.

He performed Haj with his Sheikh (master) and spent a long time in Medina. Sheikh Nizampuri kept himself so much busy in the service of Islam that he prefered to be bachelor to spare more and more time for the spread and service of Islam.

At the fag end of his life he was settled at a remote village in Chittagong named Nizampur in Mirsarai. According to Anowarun Nayyarin, after spending a long eventful life, he passed away in the year 1858.[1]

Hazrat Zaker Ali Al-Qaderi

Syedana Hazrat Shaikh Zaker Ali is said to be the descendant of Syedana Hazrat Ghous-ul-Azam Shaikh Abdul

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[1] Ibid. p.82; According to Ghulam Saklayen, Noor Muhammad Nizampui died at the battle of Balacot in 1861 (Bangladesher Sufi Sadhak, Islamic Foundation, Dhaka, 3rd edition in 1982, p. 119.)

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Qader Jilani.[1] He was born in A.H. 1111/A.D. 1699 at Baghdad. Having been directed by his great ancestor, Abdur Qader Jilani in spiritual plane he came to Bengal in 1180 Hejri/1766 A.D. accompanied by his father and other family members to propound and propagate the Qaderia order.[2] His father Syedana Hazrat Abdul Qader Abdullah al-Jili was a great sufi and attained the rank of a Qutub (one of the highest ranks in sufism). Qutb

On their way to Mangalkote from Baghdad they halted at Pataspur village where lived Maulana Danishmand (1560-1654), a great oriental scholar, well versed in religious subject as well as in science. Mangal Kote was formerly a great Muslim Muhammedan settlement and there were many mosques. When Zaker Ali settled in Mangalkote, his father went back to Baghdad. Syedana Hazrat Rowshan Ali, brother of Zaker Ali also proceeded to Shahidgong in the district of Purnea to invite the people to the Qaderia order, leaving behind his son, Syedana Hazrat Tufail Ali, under the care of Hazrat Zaker Ali. Hazrat Zaker Ali's pious and saintly life,

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1. He was born in Jilan in A.H. 470/A.D. 1077-1078. He was the founder of Qaderia Sufi order and was the head of every Sufi of various order. He died in A.H. 561/A.D. 1166.

2. Syed Mahboob Murshed Gulistan-e-Qaderi, Calcutta, 1987 (Second edition), p. 21.

profound erudition, persuasive eloquence, sublime sermon attracted all sorts of people - the rich and the poor, the learned and the illeterate, from far and near. So long the people was practising a formal, dry and moribund religion. After having received proper guidance from Hazrat Zaker Ali their faith became enlivened and meaningful. Zaker Ali was endowed with super-natural power through which he relieved sufferings of humanity. He built a Khanqah of mud wall in Mangal Kote. Zaker Ali, popularly known as Hazrat Ghous-i-Sani, left for his eternal abode at the age of eighty one in the year 1192 Hejri/A.D. 1778 leaving behind a large number of murids[1] Even today people used to go to his tomb for blessings[2].

Syedana Hazrat Shah Tufail Ali al Qaderi

Zaker Ali has been succeded by a galaxy of sufi saints. His immediate successor was his nephew and son-in-law, Tufail Ali who came with the family of Syedana Hazrat Shaikh Abdul Qader Abdullah-al-Jili in A.H. 1180. He had studied the commentaries of the Holy Quran, the tradition of the Holy Prophet, Islamic laws and various other subjects

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1. Gulistan-e-Qaderi, op. cit., p. 26
2. Ziaur Rahman Shakilpuri, Muzakera-e-Qutb-ul-Alamin, translated from Persian into Bengali by Ghulam Mainuddin Abul Khairat Qaderi, Calcutta, 1987, pp.10-11.

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under his uncle and Pir Zaker Ali. Great sufis are said to transmit their spiritual power to their successors before their death. Hazrat Zaker Ali could not transmit this knowledge to his favourite successor. On the second day after his death, when Hazrat Tufail Ali prayed with tearful eyes for his inheritance, all of a sudden two brilliant hands came out of the tomb and Hazrat Tufail Ali grasped them firmly and he at once became possessed of divine knowledge and spiritual illumination.[1] Hazrat Shah Tufail Ali spent most of his time in Mednapore but after death, according to his wish, he was burried by the side of his pir Shaikh Zaker Ali in Mangal Kote. He was popularly known as Qutb-E-Rubbani. He died in 1251 A.H. His place was filled by his son Syedana Hazrat Shah Meher Ali al Qaderi by his second wife, who later became great sufi and a true successor of his father Hazrat Shah Tufail.

Moula Ali Shah

Moula Ali Shah's real name was Haider Ali Shah, but this name is unkonwn to the common people. He is known as Moula Ali Shah. This name was given to him by his disciples, followers and admirers. The main cause behind calling him Moula Ali Shah is this that the saint would very often utter

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[1] Gulistan-E-Qaderi, op. cit., p. 28.

'Ya Ali, Ya Moula' (Oh Ali, Oh Moula).[1].

The **area** became known with the name of the saint as Maula Ali. This in a way overtook the shrine in fame. Rightly says the Statesman in its issue dated 6th April, 1981, "On the one hand there is blind admiration, on the other equally bleak ignorance. Devotees swear by the shrine, there are also people who ask , "where is Maulali Mazar" ? When told that it lies at the crossing of Lower Circular Road and S.N. Banerjee Road, they say, "You mean in Maulali ?"... Every time the bus or tram conductor shouts "Maulali, Maulali", little does he or his passengers think of the history of the shrine, and how it came to achieve the popularity it enjoys".[2]

Very little is known about the life of Hazrat Moula Ali Shah. From the scanty information given by the present Mutawalli or manager of the shrine, it is knwon that the saint, at the age of about forty came to Calcutta, and settled at the place where the present shrine exists. He came from Uttar Pradesh, probably from Badayun, which was his birth place.

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[1] Yugantar (Bengali daily News Paper), Calcutta, Sunday, 28th December, 1980.

[2] The daily Statesman, Calcutta, Monday, 6th April, 1981.

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Actual date and the year of his birth is not known. But it is said that the saint breathed his last at the age of about ninety years in 1760 A.D. He might have born in the year 1670 A.D. About his early life nothing is known. From the very early years of his life he passed his day in deep meditation. It is also said that he had studied the Islamic Literature thoroughly. Rightly says the Telegraph in its issue dated 14th January, 1985, "Torn by the struggle between flesh and spirit Hazrat Maula Ali left home at an early age. He was so stirred by the sight of human suffering that he renounced the material world and sought divine instruction to attain an existence free from evils. Deeply religious by nature, the 18th century Calcutta saint would often retire to a room and spend days in prayer and meditation".[1]

At the age of about forty, i.e., about 1710 A.D. Hazrat Moula Ali Shah came to Calcutta. Here in the vicinity of the present shrine he settled. He made a thatched hut there and began to pass his days. It was like a Khanqah. Many people came to him to get his blessings. It is said that at that time the saint made a sort of Madrasah where he would teach the lofty tenets of Islam. This tradition is still maintained by the management of the shrine.

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[1] The Telegraph, Calcutta, Monday, 14th January, 1985, vol. III, No. 185.

Very little is known about his family life. He was unmarried and when he came to Calcutta he had with him his sister who was married here and the descendants of his sister are the Mutawallis or managers of the shrine.

The Mazar Sharif is opened to the public, irrespective of caste, creed and religion. Iranians, Saudi Arabians, Afghans living in Calcutta, even hippies use to come to the shrine.[1] Among the historical visitors were Nawab Sirajud - duala and Mirza Ghalib.[2]

Syed Ruhullah al-Hussaini

Syed Ruhullah, better known as Mohajeed Saheb, was born at Baghdad in 1137 A.H.[3] He with his wife and one son Syed Badiuddin al- Hussaini and one daughter Syeda Amatuzzainab came to India and settled at Mouza Kumarpur near Mahisadal, in the district of Mednapur in the year 1765 A.D. He was at the same time a great sufi and eminent scholar as well. His most famous writing was Raudatul - azhar fi Manaqib - e - ahlil bait al Athhar. It is written on the basis of

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1. The daily Statesman, op. cit.
2. The Telegraph, op. cit.
3. Syed Izharul Hasan, Our Times, in MSS. form, Calcutta, vol. I, Chapter II.

theological ideas. He died in the month of Rabius Sani 1212 A.H. and was burried in Kumarpur.[1] Even today people go to his Mazar sharif for blessings. In Kumarpur he built a grand Khanqah and a mosque which are still there and maintained by the discendants of this saint.

His son Syed Badiduddin was also a great sufi saint of his time. He was born at Baghdad on 26th Muharram, 1163 A.H.[2] He was the successor of his father Syed Ruhullah. After the demise of his father, Syed Badiuddin shifted to village Amragohal under the police station of Panskura in the district of Mednapur. He died there on 4th Rajab 1248 A.H. and his Mazar is at Amragohal.[3]

Hazrat Ghulam Ali

Hazrat Ghulam Ali's genealogy is traced to Hazrat Ali, the son-in-law of the prophet of Islam through Hazrat Syed Shah Sadruddin Abul Fuqra Zafarabadi.[4] Syed Ghulam Ali's

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1. Dr. Rafiq Anwar, A History of Quadriya Order in West Bengal (1766 A.D. - 1953 A.D.), Ph.D. Thesis, Calcutta University, 1990, pp. 343-344.

2. Our Times, op. cit.

3. A History of Quadriya Order in West Bengal (1766 A.D. - 1953 A.D.) Ph. D. Thesis, op. cit. p. 344.

4. Syed Gholam Ali, Irshadut Talebin, in MSS form, f.1.

genealogy reached to Sadruddin Zafarabadi in this way. Syed Ghulam Ali, son of Syed Shah Wali Zafarabadi, who settled at Jaunpur, son of Syed Shah Amanatullah, son of Syed Shah Ziaul Haque, son of Syed Shah Sirajul Haque, son of Syed Shah Nurul Haque, son of Syed Shah Badrul Haque, son of Syed Shah Habibul Haque, son of Syed Shah Shamsul Haque, son of Syed Shah Ruknuddin, son of Syed Shah Sadruddin Abul Fuqra.[1]

During twelfth century A.H. Syed Ghulam Ali came to Mednapur and married the daugther of one of the contemporary sufi saints named Hazrat Syed Shah Babullah, great grand son of Razi al Bukhari, better known as Chandan Shahid Baba whose Mazar is in the heart of Mednapur town. Later on Syed Ghulam Ali along with his new bride went to a village under the sub division of Arambagh in the district of Hughli and settled there. As Syed Ghulam Ali was a great pir, i.e. spiritual guide, the village later on was called Pir Nagar.

After his settlement at Pir Nagar he married a lady of that area which was his second marriage.

Syed Ghulam Ali was a prolific writer too. Amongst his literary works Irshadut Talebin is most famous. It is in

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[1] A History of Quadriya Order in West Bengal (1766 A.D. - 1953 A.D.), Ph.D. Thesis, op. cit., pp. 175-76.

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Persian and written on the art of writing and reciting of different forms of religious formulas for therapy in different diseases generally used as 'Tawiz' (amulets). The language of this book is very simple, lucid and vivid. This book is divided into four chapters. It is in manuscript form and kept in the library of Khanqah-i-Husainiya, Khejutty, in the district of Howrah.

He built a large Khanqah at Pir Nagar and also built a mosque. He had a great number of disciples in almost all the districts of Bengal particularly form the surrounding districts, namely Mednapur, Howrah, Murshidabad and Burdwan. Large number of common people irrespective of caste and religion come to him for blessings.

He travelled extensively throughout India. He also performed Haj for atleast seven times. He died in 1219 A.H. and his Mazar is at Pir Nagar. His dscendants are still living at Khejutty and there is also a rich library full of rare books and MSS. on Sufism and religious subject.

Shah Babullah

Another contempory sufi saint[1] was Syed Shah Babullah, father in law of Syed Shah Ghulam Ali, whose genealogy reached Hazrat Ali in this way. Syed Shah Babullah, son of Syed Shah Muhammad Yusuf, son of Syed Shah Ahmad, son of Syed Shah Chandan Shahid, son of Syed Shah Mukarram, son of Syed Shah Mina, son of Syed Shah Muhammad Sayeed, son of Syed Shah Iqrar, son of Syed Shah Munir, son of Syed Shah Nuh-i-Hindi, son of Syed Shah Sayeed Bukhari, son of Syed Shah Ismail, son of Syed Shah Kamal, son of Syed Shah Ibrahim, son of Syed Shah Jamal, son of Syed Shah Ahil, son of Syed Shah Muhammad Shaghil, son of Syed Shah Imam Musa, son of Syed Shah Imam Musa Kazim, son of Syed Shah Imam Zafar-us-Sadiq, son of Syed Shah Imam Muhammad Baqir, son of Syed Shah Imam Zainul Abidin, son of Syed Shah Imam Hussain, son of Syed Shah Ali, son of Abu Talib.[1] His mazar is in the vicinity of the Mazar sharif of his great grand father Chandan Shahid at Mednapur town. There is a grand mosque and a khanqah attached to Mazar sharif. Even today a large number of people gather there every day and particularly on the Thrusdays and Fridays.

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[1] Wali Murshed, Tahris-i-Mutabat-i-Wali Murshed (Urdu book), Calcutta, 1312 A.H. p.57.

Hazrat Maulana Syed Khwaja Miskin Ali Shah Chishti

He is popularly known as Chiragh-i-Bangala. He was a great saint of Chishtiya order of eighteenth century. He was born at Delhi and afterwards came to Calcutta and settled there. His Mazar Sharif is in the vicinity of Nuna Pukur Tram Depo, i.e., 24 Benia Pukur Lane, Calcutta-14.

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[1] Ibid, pp. 182-183.

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He was a great writer of Urdu language. His Diwan which is written in Urdu language is kept at his Mazar sharif under the custody of the Mutawalli of the Mazar.[1] It is full of high thoughts and spiritual ideas. The cauplet of each and every poem tells about the unity of God, the Almighty and also about Tasawwuf. The language of the Diwan is very simple and lucid. From this it can be said with great confidence that Hazrat Miskin Ali Shah was a great saint, a great poet and also a great scholar at the same time. He died on nineth September 1846 A.D.[2] Even today a large number of people come to the Mazar for blessings.

Some of the Sufis were renowned poets. They have expressed many complex religious matters, mysteries of Sufism as well as famous historical characters in the form of poetry. Some Sufis wrote books on Tasʿawwuf, Hadith and Tafsīr. In the connection the name of Faqir Garibullah, Ali Raẓa (Kanu Faqir), Shah Noori, Faqir Ilahabadi can be mentioned. According to their achievements they have discussed in subsequent chapters.

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[1] I personally went to Mazar sharif and saw it.

[2] It is known from inscription of the Mazar that he died on nineth September, 1846 A.D.

Faqirs of Bengal were not only engaged in meditation but also revolted against social injustice and oppression perpetrated by Zaminders and other royal families over the poor cultivators.

Most of the Fakirs were educated and had great influence over the common people. They made use of their influence and waged a battle against the tyrant rulers which is known in the history as Faqir Bidrahah or movement of the Faqirs.[1] The following Fakirs are noteworthy in this respect.

Balaki Shah of Barisal

He took up arms in 1791 against the Zamindar for taking revenues at a higher rate.

Again, Muhammad Reza of sylhet with his five thousand troops revolted against the East India company and declared independence but later on he was defeated and sentenced to life imprisonment.

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[1] Seerat Smaranika, Souvenir of the Occasion of the Celebration of the birth and death anniversary of the Holy Prophet Hazrat Mauhammad (P.B.U.H.), complied, edited and published by Shahabuddin Ahmad, Islamic Foundation, Dacca, 1984, p. 59.

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Majnu Shah

He rose his arms against the East India Company for their raising revenues forcibly from the people. Under his able guidance the Faqirs started plundering at Rajshahi, Pabna, Rangpur, Dinajpur, Dhaka every year. They also plundered government treasuries. They converted their khanqas into the centre of conspiracy. In 1776 they made a fort at Mahasthan. Majnu Shah died in 1787 A.D. His brother Musha Shah became leader and follow the foot step of his brother. Apart from him his followers Chirag Ali Shah, Paragol Shah, Rauson Shah, Karim Shah also took active part in the struggle.

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CHAPTER - IV

ARABIC AND PERSIAN LITERATURE IN BENGAL DURING EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

ARABIC AND PERSIAN LITERATURE IN BENGAL DURING EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Bengal which has been aptly called Jannatabad by Emperor Jahangir for its natural beauty attracted not only foreign invaders but also many foreign scholars from various parts of the world. With the establishment of the Muslim rule in Bengal in the early thirteenth century of Christan era its cultural history took a new turn. The Islamic system of education was introduced in every place where the Muslims were settled down. The early Muslim rulers of Bengal were Turko-Afghan and they introduced Persian instead of their own native language. From the very beginning they adopted it as official language and it was continued for the following seven hundred years. As the Persian was court language, the scholars were more inclined to Persian work and undertook literary activities more in Persian with the hope of gaining liberal patronages from the rulers. Apart from the Muslims this soft language was equally dear to the Hindus. The Muslim writers had profusely used persian words in their Bengali literature and their Hindu counterparts also did not lag behind in this respect. Though there was a profusion of Persian works, Arabic was also popular in Bengal because it was a dignified language to the Muslims as it is the language of the holly scripture and the Traditions of the Prophet. The mosques, maktabs, madrasahs, seminaries of spiritual leaders and theologians contributed a lot to the growth of Arabic studies. The study of the Quran and Hadith occupied the foremost position in the Madrasah education, followed by Tafsir and Hadith. As the Arabic learning in Bengal was confined to the religious institutions or Madrasahs the students used to flock from one Madrasah to another for the acquisation of knowledge of religion.

A number of persons have taken up important works in both the languages. A brief introduction of such writers and their works are given below.

Mir Muhammad Ali

Mir Muhammad Ali was born to Mir Abdullah at Aurangabad in 1116 A.H. Yusuf Ali in his Zamima[1] and Ghulam Husain in his Seir-ul-Mutakherin[2] have discussed about this erudite scholar of comprehensive genius with great attention.

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[1] Yusuf Ali Khan, Zamima-i-Tadhkira-i-Yusufi, (Hadiqat al-Safa), edited with Notes and Introduction by Abdus Subhan, The Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, 1978, pp. 4-15 of Persian Text.

[2] Ghulam Husain Khan, Seir Mataqherin or Review of Modern Times (English Eranslation~~), vol.~~ II, First published in 1926 and Reprinted in 1990, Delhi, p. 63.

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According to Yusuf Ali Khan, "Mir Muhammad Ali was the symbol of believers and the knower of secrets, concealed or manifest"[1].

This great personality led an eventful life and found many ups and downs in his life. At the age of seventeen he *left his home and made an extensive journey to Iraq and* Iran in search of knowledge.At last he came to Azimabad at the repeated request of Zainu'l-Din Ahmad Khan Haibatjang but he could not stay there long because of ruthless murder of Haibat Jang by Shamshir Khan, which brought in his wake untold misery to him. The misery did not last long, fortune smiled on him, he was received with great honour by Nawab Alivardi Khan when he was returning to Murshidabad from Patna after putting down the Afghan insurrection.

In the eyes of Alivardi Khan he was the wisest man in spiritual as well as worldly matters. Nawab would always welcome him in utmost veneration.

He was a great shia theologian. He wrote in chaste Arabic an account of the fundamentals of that sect, with special reference to the biographies of the Holy Prophet and his family. He wrote an Arabic commentary on the Mafatih of

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[1] Cited by Wakil Ahmad in Banglar Muslim Buddhijibi, (1757-1800), Bangla Academy, Dhaka, 1985, p. 57.

Mulla Muhsin Kashi and a Persian commentary entitled Sharh-i-Nukhba which he could not complete. He wrote some Notes in Persian on the Kafia-i-Nahw. It was also left incomplete. Some of his notable works are Sharh-i-Risala-i-Mulla Muhsin Kashi, Sharh-i-Risala-i-Majaliullahi, Risala-i-Tahqiq-i-Ruh, Risala dar Ithbat-i-Madhhab, Risala dar Nawafil.[1]

He had two thousand books under his personal collection. This versatile genius used to compose good poetic works also, dealing mostly with ethics, philosophy, divinity and mysticism. His eloquent speech, sharp intellignece and profound learning made him dear to people in all walks of life.

Muhammad Wafah

Muhammad Wafah, a relative of Nawab Alivardi Khan, worked under him. He composed a work entitled Wakiyat-i-Fateh Bangla, which deals with the history of Alivardi's reign.[2] It is also known as Wakiyat-i-Mahabat Jang.

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[1] The Zamima-i-Tadhkira-i-Yusufi (Hadiqat al-Safa), op. cit., p. 14.

[2] M. A. Rahim, Banglar Samajik-o-Sanskritic Itihas, translated by Asaduzzaman and Fazle Rabbi, vol. 2, Dhaka, 1982, P Tetallis (43).

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Shah Muhammad Faqir al-Allahabadi

(1120 A.H. - 1164 A.H./1708 A.D.-1750 A.D.)

Shah Muhammad Faqir, son of shah Yahya al-Allahabadi was a well known poet as well as a famous Muhaddith. He studied Hadith literature with Sheikh Hayat al-Sindhi (d. 1163 A.H.) at al Madina, first in the year 1737 and then from 1743 A.D. to 1745. He came back to Allahabad in 1746. His lust for travelling drove him out again and he visited many place like Azimabad (Patna), Murshidabad, Hughli, Chittagong etc. Once when he was on his way to Haramayn, he fell ill and died at Burhanpur on the 11th Dhull Hijja, 1164 A.H./1750 A.D.

Faqir had an intimate relation with Shah Wali Allah of Delhi and was a fellow student of Azad al Bilgrami. Faqir wrote many memorable works on Hadith which are given below.

1. Qurrat al-Ain fi Ithbat Rafi al-Yadain.
2. Risala-i-Najatiya dar Aqa'id-i-Hadithiya.

This Persian work was composed at Islamabad (Chittagong) during his short stay there in 1748 A.D. It deals with the doctrines of the Sunnis from the view point of Apostolic Traditions. This work has been published and can be had from the family library of Maulana Abd Allah al

Baqi of Dinajpur, Bengal.[1]

3. Nazm 'Ibarat-i-Safr al-Sa' ada.

4. Mathnawi dar Ta'rif 'Ilm Hadith.

Sayyid Ghulam Husain Tabatabai

Sayyid Ghulam Husain was an important personality of 18th century. He became famous for his important work Seir-ul-Mutaqherin. He was born at Delhi in 1140 A.H./1727-1728 A.D.[2] He migrated to Murshidabad in 1732 A.D.- 33 A.D. When Alivardi Khan was appointed Naib-Subahdar of Patna his family migrated to Patna. In 1729 Ghulam Husain was appointed tutor to Shaukat Jang and lived at Purnia till 1756 A.D. He first joined army and was awarded the title of 'Mir' but he was more interested in literary pursuit. He wrote a poem named Basarat ul Imama in which he described the biography of his own grand father, Alimullah Dehlavi. Apart from this, he wrote an explanatory book in Persian on Mathnawi-i-Rum. He also composed a Diwan and the Persian Tafsir of the Quran.[3]

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[1] Muhammad Ishaq, Indias Contribution to the Study of Hadith Literature, The University of Dacca, Dacca, 1955, pp. 168-169.

[2] Jadu Nath Sarkar, Bengal Nawabs, Calcutta, 1952, p. 11.

[3] Muhammad Abdullah, Paschim Bange Farsi Sahitya, (unpublished), p. 86.

Ghulam Husain left Patna for Benaras in 1756 A.D. for some political reasons. Later on he came back to Patna and engaged himself in writing Seir-ul Mutagherin. At that time he was not economically sound but he got liberal help from his friends.

This work is written in three volumes. The first volume gives a general description of Hindustan, its provinces, cities, products and people and also gives briefly the ancient history of India upto the death of Aurangzib. The second volume commences from the death of Aurangzib in which the author has described elaborately about the Nizamat of Mrushidabad, how the Britishers gradully dominated over Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, law and order situation and administrative set-up in the states under East India company etc.[1] The third volume discusses about Emperor Muhammad Shah, Haydar Ali of Hydrabad and Marathas.

Ghulam Husain was endowed with the essential qualities of a historian - sharp intellect, keen observation and analysing power. Above all, he himself was fully aware of the duties of a historian. He has written at the beginning of his book, "It is the faithful historian's duty to bring to light whatever he knows with certitude. I shall take the liberty to assemble such events as are come to my knowledge and to speak of them precisely as they have happened".[1]

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[1] This second volume is very important and to which the title Seir Mutagherin, "Review of Modern Times" is particulary applicable.

But he couldn't maintain his independant attitude which is evident in the statement made about the treaty signed between Lord Clive and Emperor Shah Alam of Delhi to grant the Diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa at the cost of rupees twenty four lacs revenue annually. "Thus a business of such a magnitude was done and finished in less time than would have been taken up for the sale of a jack-ass, or a beast of burden, or a head of cattle".[2] This comment clearly reflects the deep anguish of the auther.

The contemporary French writer M. Remond lived at Murshidabad for a long time. He accepted Islam and became famous as Haji Mustafa. In 1786 A.D. Haji Mustafa translated the second volume of Seir ul Mutagherin into English which was published in the name of "Review of the Modern Times" in 1789 A.D. He remarked that, "Ghulam Husain has given everywhere in his book, a sabtle hints, to his countrymen, of setting up some sort of barricade against British domination".[1] That Ghulam Husain Tabatabai was a great historian, has been admitted nationally and internationally. Charles Elliot, Briggs, Stewart, have all admitted their indebtedness to him. Satischandra Mitra has found an excellent manifestation of patriotism and honesty throughout his writings.[2]

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[1] Cited by Wakil Ahmed, BanglarMuslim Buddhijibi (1757-1800), op. cit., p. 70

[2] Seir-Mutagherin, Vol.III, op.cit., p.9.

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The summary of the main work of Seir ul Mutaqherin was published by Maulana Abdul Karim from Calcutta in the name of Zubdatul Tawarikh in 1827 A.D. Maulana Abdul Majid edited and published the main Persian work in 1833.

Karam Ali

Karam Ali was born in 1736 A.D. at Murshidabad. His father came from Delhi at the call of Nawab Alivardi Khan. Karam Ali was related to nawab Alivardi Khan from his mother's side. The Nawab granted him stipend when he was only five years old and he got it upto 1772 A.D. In 1748 A.D. Karam Ali was appointed Faujdar of Ghoraghat. He worked on the same post upto the death of Nawab Alivardi Khan in 1756 A.D. Though frequently absent from his duty. Once he went to Purnia and joined Faujdari of Rangamati under Saulat

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1. Ibid., p.6 (Preface).

2. Satish Chandra Mitra, Musalman Oitihasik, Dacca Review-o-Sammilon, Dacca, Asar, 1324 (Bengali Calender), p.109.

Jang (Sayyid Ahmad), without informing Alivardi. Alivardi Khan was acquainted with it but he did not discharge the later from the post.

After the death of Alivardi Khan, Karam Ali supported Shaukat Jang for the masnad of Murshidabad. At the battle between Shaukat Jang and Siraj-ud-daula in 1756 Karam Ali supported Shaukat Jang. For this reason Siraj ud-daula was hostile to him. Karam Ali depicted Siraj's character very unpleasantly.

He wrote Muzaffar Nama in Persian. This book discusses the history of Bengal and Bihar from 1722 A.D. to 1772 A.D. and dedicated to his patron, Muhammad Reza Khan Muzaffar Jang who was a deputy subahdar of Bengal.[1] It throws full light on the life of Nawab Alivardi Khan with special emphasis to his stay in Bihar, his attack on Sarfaraz Khan, his accession, his march to Orissa, his campaigns against Baqar Ali, the massacre of Bhaskar and the battle with other Maratha sardars, expedition of Raghuji, his march against Habibullah Khan, celebration of the marriage of Akram-ud-daula, Babur Jang, Mir Muhammad Jafar Khan, Ataullah Khan, Siraj-ud-daula, events of 1752 and 1753 A.D., Quli Khan, his death, his character, reign of Siraj-ud-daula, Capture of

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[1] Bengal Nawabs, op. cit, p. 10.

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Calcutta, Conquest of Purnia, English conquest and the last chapter is entitled 'Palassy' which discusses the last day of Siraj ul-Daula.

Azad al-Husaini

Azad al-Husaini was an immigrant Persian scholar who wrote a book entitled Nau-Bahar-i-Murshid Quli Khan which was concerning Murshid Quli Khan II. This book also gives a few significant anecdotes of the Mughal governors of Bengal like Mir Jumla, Muhammad Azam Shah, Chittagong outpost restored and Murshid Quli II's conquest of Tripura. Many valuable informations regarding social picture of Bengal as well as culture and cultivation of knowledge in the court can be had from this work.[1] It is a main source for the study of the history of Bengal during the medieval period. The book was presented by the author to his patron Murshid Quli II who came to Dhaka as a deputy Governor in 1738 A.D.[2]

Murtaza Husain

Murtaza Husain who was more famous as Allah-Yar-Usmani Bilgrami worked under Mir Qasim for sometime. In 1796 A.D.

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[1] Banglar Samajik-o-Sanskritic Itihash, vol.2, op.cit., p. Biyallis (42).

[2] Bengal Nawabs, op. cit, p.1.

captain Jonathan scott appointed him Munshi. At the instruction of his patron Jonathan scott, he composed Hadiqat-al-Iqlim which deals with social history of Bengal. It also gives an account of biographical as well as geographical facts.[1]

Shah Nuri

Shah Nuri, a popular saint, was the inhabitant of Babupura in Dhaka. He got his early education from the Madrasah of Shaista Khan at Pathartali Katra of Dhaka. Hakim Habib-ur-Rahman informs that in about 1120 A.H., when he was still young, he used to come daily from his village, Magh Bazar, situated at a distance of four miles, to study at this madrasah.[2] After that he was admitted to Motijhil Madrasah in Murshidabad. After having completed his studies he became disciple of Khaliqur Rahman Qaderi al Sattari alias Baghu Dewan. He acquired proficiency in Persian and wrote a book entitled Kibrit-i-Ahmar in 1775 A.D. which literally means red sulpher but idiomatically it signifies a

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1. Banglar Samajik-O-Sanskritic Itihash, op.cit.,p, Tetallics(43).

2. Hakim Habibur Rahman Asudegan-i-Dhaka, Dacca, 1946, cited by Abul Hasnat Nadwi, Hindustan Ki Qadim Islami Darasgahen, Ma'arif Press,Azamgarh, 1936, p. 56.

rare thing.[1] He actually gave this title to his spiritual guru, Baghu Dewan. According to Saghir Hasan al Masumi this work was written in 1763 A.D.[2] In this work, apart from the discussion on tasawwuf, he dealt with contemporary religious personalities. He studied *Mashariq al-Anwar*, a compilation of Hadith, and *Sharh Matali*, a text-book on logic. After coming back to Dhaka in 1779 A.D. He established *Khangah* at Magh Bazar and spent the rest of his life in religious activities. He died in 1785 A.D. and was burried at Magh Bazar.

Maulana Abdul Ali

Maulana Abdul Ali, popularly known as Bahr ul-ulum (Ocean of Learning), was born at Lucknow in 1731. His father Nizam ud-Din (founder of Dars-i-Nizamia) and his grand father, Kutub ud-Din were renowned scholars and teachers. He was taught by his father and Kamal ud-Din (Successor of Nizam ud-Din). He was one of the greatest Alims of India and Pakistan.[3]

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1. *Banglar Muslim Buddhijibi*, op. cit., p. 89.
2. Saghir Hasan al Masumi, Bengal's Contribution to Islamic Learning, *Islamic Studies*, Journal of the Islamic Research Institute of Pakistan, vol. VI, March, 1967, p. 162.
3. Maulana Noor Muhammad Azmi, *Hadither Tatta-O-Itihash*, Dacca, 1966, p. 264.

At the request of Sadr ad-Din, founder of Buhar Madrasah, he taught Hadith, Tafsir at Buhar Madrasah.[1] He was a good teacher and wrote a number of books. His chief works being commentaries on Arabic test-books of Jurisprudence, Logic and Scholastic Theology.[2] He wrote Al-Arkanul Ar ba Ya Resayalul Arkan in Arabic which deals with Namaz, Roza, Haj, Zakat according to Hanafi tradition. It was published at Calcutta in the name of Al-Arkanul Arba.[3] He was died at Madras in 1810.

Shaykh Itisamuddin

He was the first Bengalee to make a voyage to Europe. He was born at Panchnur village in the district of Nadia, that is why he is known as Panchnuri. His grand father Shihabuddin Ahmad Talish came to India from Iran, who wrote a book Tarikh-i-Assam which is the account of Mir Jumla's conquest of Asam. He came to Bengal with Mir Jumla's troops in the year 1662 A.D. and ultimately settled there.

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1. Ibid; Prof. Hidayat Husain, Founders of Buhar Library, Islamic Culture, vol. VII, Jan.,1933, Hyderabad, p.130.

2. E.J. Brill, First Encyclopaedia of Islam, (1913-1936), vol. II, Leiden, 1987, p. 584.

3. Muhammad Iqbal Ansari, Bahrul Ulum Abdul Ali Firangi Mahali, Burhan, edited by Syed Ahmad Akbarabadi, July, 1975, vol. 75, issue 1, Delhi, Nadwatul Mussanif, p. 36.

In early life Shaykh Itisamuddin worked under Mir Jafar Ali Khan as a Serishtadar, afterwards he served the Company in different capacities sometime as a Munshi or as a Bakhshi or as a Sarishtadar. He has regretfully mentioned that his entire youth was spent in serving the English people.

In 1775 A.D. he accompanied colonel john Hamilton to Puna-Satra where a treaty was signed between the English and Maratha Chieftains, Nana Farnavish and Pandit Sakharam. All the works of the treaty were done by Itisamuddin with the help of the interpreter and translator George Vansitart.

How he got a chance to travel to Europe is a long story. Briefly it is as follows:

When the joint troops of Nawab Shuja-ud-daula and Emperor Shah Alam were defeated by the English forces at Baksar in 1764 A.D. a peace treaty was signed between emperor Shah Alam and Lord Clive. Emperor was made to grant the Dewani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa to the English in 1765 A.D. The English stipulated to pay anually twenty four Lacs as Revenue of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.[1] Shaykh Itisamuddin was one of the persons who were entrusted with the duty of writing the deeds of this treaty. He states that, after having been requested by the Emperor to employ some troops for his protection, Lord Clive informed that he was not empowered to do so. It is the concern of the king of England and authority of East India Company. So the Emperor decided to send a deligate to the king with his entreaty. Captain Swinton was chosen as a deligate and Itisamuddin was requested to accompany him. He spent a year in England, He visited the Zoological garden, the museum, the observatory many eminent educational Institutions, Universities, Libraries and places of historical interest. After having observed their improved communication system and other advancement of Sciences he realised that the English were more advanced and civilized nation than the Indian in every sphere of life. He chanced to meet William Jones in the Library of Oxford University. Jones later became the Puisne Judge of Calcutta Supreme Court, who also founded the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784 A.D.

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[1] Ghulam Husain Salim, Riyazu-s-Salatin, translated by Abdus Salam, p. 395, 1st published at Calcutta in 1903, Repreted at Delhi in 1975.

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Itisamuddin was offered a lucrative job of teaching persian in London but his love for mother land did not allow him to accept it, so he came back to Calcutta in 1173 (in Bengali Calender).

Itisamuddin composed a work in Persian entitled Shigurf nama which is the account of his journey in England. It is his first and main work. This work was not undertaken soon after his return from England. After having been requested by his friends, he worte this work in 1784 A.D., though he was much worried both mentally and physically due to some interanal and external factors, at that time. This book could not be published. In 1827 A.D. Captain J.E. Alexander published its English version in an abridged form from London. In the second decade of the twentieth century the English translation of the first three chapters by Abdul Aziz Talukdar was published in *Dacca Review*.[1] Afterwards A.S.M. Taifur Rahman wrote an English article about this work in the "*Bengal Past and Present*" (July, 1936).

Dr. A.B.M. Habibullah also wrote an article in Bengali on the same subject entitled '*Europe Pratham Bharatio*' (*The first Indian in Europe*) and published it in the "*Muazzin*".[2] In this article he has expressed his attitude towards Itisamuddin and his work. According to him Itisamuddin was a typical Bengali intellectual. In fact he had no political farsightedness but had a good historical insight. Itisamuddin has discussed in detail about the fall of the Mughal Empire, the subjugation of Bengal and also predicted

1. Abul Aziz Takuldar, *Belayat Nama*, in *Dacca Review*, February-March, April, Dacca, 1917.
2. A.B.M. Habibullah, *Europe Pratham Bharatio*, *Muazzin*, Kartick, Dhaka, 1343 (As per Bengali Calender), pp. 238-49.

that in near future the whole country will come uner the British rule, but he did not discussed the means to safeguard the freedom of the country. He had attributed the down-fall of Mughal Empire to the luxurious life style of the upper class of the society and the ruling persons. Itisamuddin had noted with admiration, the fellow-feelings, self-independence, keen understanding of business-matters and enterprising mentality of the British. He has regretted the deficiencies of these properties in his countrymen. About the works, Habibullah is of the opinion that it is both an autobiography and traveller's cronicle. His language is simple and lucid, his description is picturesque and the contents are informative.

Shaykh Itisamuddin wrote another work entitled Nasabnama in which he has described his family history.[1]

Mirza Abu Talib

Mirza Abu Talib was born at Lucknow. His father Haji Muhammad Khan, a Turk of Azerbijan, came to India and served under Nawab Safdarjang of Oudh, was married to a Nawab family of Lucknow. But he had to leave Lucknow due to some political conspiracy. He was settled at Murshidabad. His son, Mirza Abu Talib was married to a close relative of Nawab Mir Jafar Ali. Abu Talib, in his long eventful life served under Mir Jafar Ali for the first few years of his life. He also stayed at Lucknow and Calcutta in search of his livelihood. At Lucknow he was appointed on some high post under Nawab, Shujauddaula and Nawab Asafuddaula. At the time of the later he lost his office and came to Calcutta where he was cordially received by the English. In 1790 he constructed his own house at Calcutta. He went to Lucknow, after having been appointed as Amilder at his old age. He expired at Lucknow in 1805 and was buried there.[1] This multifaceted genius was both a poet and a historian. As a poet he was spiritualist but as a historian he was a materialist.[2] He composed several important works. In 1791 A.D. he edited and published Diwan-i-Hafiz. In the same year he published Khulasat ul Afkar in which he made an elaborate critical discussion on the work of four hundred ninety four poets - past and contemporary.[3]

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[1] Banglar Muslim Buddhijibi, op. cit., p. 78.

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He was offered a voyage to Europe by Captain David Richardson. He availed himself of this opportunity and made an extensive tour throughout Europe and came back to Calcutta in 1803 A.D.

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[1] Elliot and Dowson, The History of India as told by its Own Historians, vol VIII, London, 1877, p.299.

[2] Banglar Muslim Buddhijibi, op.cit. p.81.

[3] Ibid, p.79

When he was in London he composed a poem in Persian entitled *'Surur Afza'* (*Praise of London*) and an essay in Persian entitled *'Liberty of Oriental Women'*. Both are translated into English by Captan David Richardson and published in *Asiatic Annual Register* (1801). The former in the name of '*Ode to London*' and the latter 'Vindication of the liberties of the Asiatic Women'. His another poem entitled '*Elegy on Tufuzzul Hussain Khan*' was published in the same Journal in 1803. The manuscript of *Surur Afza* and a full portrait of Abu Talib drawn by R.A. North Court have been kept in Edinburgh Library.[1]

Ma'asir-i-Talibi (1804) is the product of his experience acquired during his tour of Europe. In 1810, Charles Stewart translated it into English in two volumes. In 1822 A.D. it was translated into French from English and published from Paris. In 1813 A.D. it was translated into German and published from Viena. The Europeans were very much eager to know the views of an oriental scholar about Europe and this work was enough to meet their curiosity.

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[1] C.A. Storey (edited), *Persian Literature*, A Biographical Survey, Vol.I, Part I, London, 1953, p.146.

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He composed two historical works entitled Lubbus Siyar and Lubbat Tawarikh in 1793-1794 A.D. According to author the former work is an abstract of some thousands of books and therefore, he designated it Lubbus Siyar wa Jahan-Numa, that means 'The Essence of Biographies and the World-Reflecting Mirror'.[1] In it he has mentioned all the occurances of the world, old and new and given a connected account of the prophet, Khulfa, Salatin and celebrated men from the beginning to his time. He wrote another work based on his experiences gathered from his stay at Lucknow entitled Tafzihul Ghafilin (1797). It is a contemporary political and economic account of Oudh. Lubbut Tawarikh, the history of Europe was composed by Abu Talib from the works of Jonathan Scott at the instruction of Asafuddaula, Nawab of Oudh.[2]

He wrote one work on Astrology, named Miraj al Tawhid (1804). He also translated Arabic Laxicon, Qamus into Persian.

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1. The History of India as told by its own Historians, op.cit., Vol.VIII,pp.298-99.

2. Charles Stewart(translated), Travels of Mirza Abu Talib Khan, in Asia, Africa, and Europe during the year 1799-1803, London, 1814, Vol.II, p.177.

According to Humayun Kabir, Mirza Abu Talib first perceived, about fifty years before that to Karl Marks, the crucial role of economy to bring about the social revolution of mankind but he could not formulate his theory like that to Karl Marks.[1]

He was against the traditional way of history writing He was in favour of giving emphasis to the conditions of general people rather than that of Royal family. Because of his profound erudition in Persian he was respectfully called 'Persian Prince' in London In India he was known as Abu Talib Londoni due to his voyage to England

Munshi Salimullah

Munshi Salimullah, the author of Tawarikh-i-Bangala, was Mir Munshi of Nawab Mir Jafar Ali Khan Later on he became Munshi of Governor Henri Vansitart (1760-1764) Having been stimulated and helped by Vansitart he wrote Tawarikh-i-Bangala in 1763 The other name of the work is Tahwarnama It was named after the Persian title of Vansitart, Tahwar Jang'[2]

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[1] Humayun Kabir, Mirza Abu Talib Khan, Patna University, Patna, 1961, cited by Wakil Ahmed, Banglar Muslim Buddhijibi, op cit , p 81

[2] Banglar Muslim Buddhijibi, op cit , p 63.

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Francis Gladwin translated this work into English and published it from Calcutta in 1788, with the title ' A Narrative of the Transitions in Bengal'. He praised the writer for his vast knowledge about contemporary political situation.

In this book Salimullah has written the history of Bengal starting from Subahdar Ibrahim Khan (1689-97 A.D.) to the death of Alivardi Khan (1756 A.D.). This is a valuable work as regards the biography and rule of Diwan, Nazim Murshid Quli Khan.[1]

Kalyan Singh

Kalyan Singh belonged to a royal family. His grand father Roy Himmat Singh was a diwan under Amir ul Umarah Shamshamud - daula and father Sitab Roy was Naib Nazim in Bihar. He was given the same post by the English after the death of his father in 1773 A.D. He composed a remarkable statistical work named Khulasat ul Tawarikh, its second volume was entitled Waradat-i-Qasimi. Khulasat ul Tawarikh gives a statistical account of Bengal and other states during the Mughal reign.[2]

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1. Banglar Samajik-o-Sanskritic Itihas, op. cit, p. Biyallis (42).

2. Ibid, p. Chuallis (44).

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Ram Chatar Man Kayath

Chahar Gulshan of Ram Chatar Man Kayath was completed in 1173 A.H./1759 A.D.[1] It is also known as Akhbaru-l-Nawadir, "Account of Rare Things". The writer completed it only a week before his death. After his death it was edited by his grand son Rai Bhan Raizada in 1204 A.H./1789-90 A.D.

The Chahar Gulshan or "Four Gardens" consists of four Books. Book I gives an account of the kings of Hindustan from Jadhishthira to the fall of Mughal Empire, with a statistical account of the several subahs of Hindustan proper, and of their rulers and saints. Book II gives an *account of the southern subahs of India, and of their rulers* and saints.

Book III Itineraries from Delhi to the different quarters of India.

Book IV - An account of Hindu Faqirs.[2]

The historical part of the Charhar Gulshan is not so important. The biographies of Muslim and Hindu saints, the

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1. According to Elliot and Dowson(The History of India as told by its own Historians, London, vol.VIII, 1877, p. 255), it was composed in 1759 A.D. But according to M.A. Rahim (Banglar Samajik-o-Sanskritic Itihas, Dhaka, vol. 2, 1982, P. Chuallis(44)), this work was composed in 1720 A.D.

2. The History of India as told by its own Historians, op. cit, P. 255-256.

Itineraries and the satistical account of India are very important and useful. Though the authour was a Hindu, he gives the achievments of Muslim saints in a true sprit of belief.

Muhammad Qasim

Muhammad Qasim was the mentor of Shaykh Itisamuddin. His father's name was Muhammad Diem Burdwani. He translated Sirajia into Persian under the title of Al-Faraizush Sharifia in 1776 A.D.[1] which is preserved in India Office Library. Sirajia is an Arabic book on Muslim Law of inheritance. The original writer of this book is Siraj-ud-din. Warren Hastings gave its manuscript to William Jones and Jones read it four times with great attention which he himself mentioned in the manuscript.[2]

Yusuf Ali

Yusuf Ali Khan was the son of Ghulam Ali Khan and son-in-law of Nawab Sarfaraz Khan. His father was a trusted general of Nawab Alivardi (1740-1756) and also Diwan-i-Khalisa of Patna. Yusuf Ali also enjoyed, like his father,

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1. Bangla Muslim Buddhijibi, op. cit., p. 85.
2. E. Denison and E.G. Browne (edited), Catalogue of two Collections of Persian and Arabic Manuscripts, presume in the India Office Library, London, 1902, p. 1.

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prestigious positions. He was famous for his wide experience and vast erudition. His Ahwal-i-Mahabat Jang is an eyewitness account of Nawab Alivardi Khan and his time. It was written in persian and is considered a very important source for the reconstruction of the history of Bengal of that period. The author has written on the basis of his personal observations,or through some witnesses directly. The main aim of the author was to record the achievements and virtues of Nawab Alivardi Khan. Dr. Abdus Subhan who had translated and edited this work of Yusuf Ali informs, "he had composed about one-third of the work when further writing fell into long delay that was caused by various anxieties and tributations, mainly physical and political. The laps of time erased much of his memories of events witnessed long before. That led him to search some old relatives of Alivardi from whom he expected to gather some information. But it was in vain. At last in Shaban A.H. 1177, he resumed the writing of remaining portion of his work and completed it soon. But the history of Alivardi Khan stops abruptly in A.H. 1168, one year before the Nawab's death and the account of Siraju'd Daula's rule begins on the very next page. The book lacks a definite plan is shown by its abrupt beginning and end, the absence of a preface and the prolonged gaps occuring between the writing of different portions of the work".[1] The value of this history, in the words of Sir Jadu Nath Sarkar, 'lies in its authenticity' [2] Its author, Yusuf Ali Khan, was the son-in-law of Nawab Sarfaraz Khan but his father was a trusted and loyal companion of Alivardi. He was, however, bold enough to point out the misdeeds of his father-in-law as well as of Haji Ahmad who was a householder of Alivardi This clearly indicates that he was not a partial historian. His work throws light on some new facts and dates which are not mentioned by his contemporaries.

It is to be noted that the account of the movement of the army of Alivardi from Burdwan to Katwa is found only in Yusuf Ali's work In the same way Alivardi's expeditions against Mustafa Khan who took shelter in the fort of Chunar of Nawab Safdarjang and his attack on Banaras to avenge Safdarjang's hostile treatment moted out to him at Patna in 1743 A D are narrated by Yusuf Ali only This work is also very important from the political point of view Yusuf Ali sketches the character of Siraju'd-Daula in such a way which is not usualy presented by other historians According to him the death of two hundred Englishmen was an accident due to suffocation only. The author has also given informations about Mir Jafar and Mir Qasim Khan. Thus this work is very important for the history of Bengal during eighteenth century.

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[1] Yusuf Ali Khan, Tarikh-i-Bangala-i-Mahabatjangi, edited by Abdus Subhan, Calcutta, 1969, p 21

[2] Bengal Nawabs, op cit , p 80

Yusuf Ali Khan wrote another work entitled Hadigat-al-Safa, a consice general history in three volumes. These are- volume I : Pre-Islamic times, early Islam, and the Abbasid etc. Volume II : Timur and the Timurids to Muhammad Shah. Volume III : Non-Timurids rulers in India, with a Khatimah containing a biografical dictionary of Persian Poets.[1] It was completed in 1770 A.D. His Zamima is the concluding portion of Hadigat-al-Safa. This Zamima has been edited with Notes and Introduction by Abdus Subhan and has been published from the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, in 1978. The biographies of some Perisan poets and literaturs mentioned in the Zamima are briefly given here - literateur

Nizamu'l-Mulk Asafjah

Mirza Qamaru'l-Din Nizamu'l Mulk Asafjah Fathjang was Turanian in origin. During Muhammad Shah'h reign (1719 A.D.-

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[1] C. A. Storey (edited), Persian Literature: A Biographical Survey, Vol. I, part 1, London, Reprinted 1970, p. 140.

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1748 A.D.) he became the subahdar of the Deccan. Yusuf ali speaks highly of Asafjah's Personal character and his patronage of art and letters . He was a poet of good rank. Asafjah has written two anthologies of Persian verses, one is Diwan-i-Asaf and the other is Diwan-i-Shakir. His earlier pen name was Shakir.[1]

A'lamu'l-Daulah Haji Muhammad Khan Bahadur

Professionally he was a businessman. Through his flourishing business, he attained affluent position in the society and even became the Governor of Tirhut. Strictly speaking he was not a poet. Occasionally he would Compose verses.

Kamalu'l din Ahqar

He belonged to Kashmir. He was a relative of Abdul Majid Khan, Diwan of Khalisa during Muhammad Shah's reign. During Alivardi's rule and after Abdul Majid Khan's death he came to Bengal from Delhi. He composed many nice verses.[2]

Mir Murtaza Haidar (d. A.H. 1177)

During Shuja-ud-Daulah's reign Mir Murtaza Haidar came to Murshidabad from Delhi. He composed a Persian Diwan consisting of ten thousand verses. According to the author of Hadiqat-al-Safa, he was an intelligent poet and equally good in all forms of verse.[1]

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[1] Zamima-i-Tadhkira-i-Yusufi (Hadiqat Al-Safa), op. cit., p. 11.

[2] Ibid, p. 12.

Mir Baqir

Mir Baqir was a poet of both Persian and Urdu. His pen-name was Khurram for his persian verses and Mukhlis for his Urdu verses. His father Mukhlis Ali Khan was the son-in-law of Haji Ahmad, brother of Alivardi Khan.[2]

Mir Muhammad Taqi Khayal (d. 1173/1760)

He was born and brought up at Ahmadabad and came to Delhi during Muhammad Shah's reign. He came to Murshidabad during Alivardi's reign. He wrote Bustan-i-Khayal, a famous romance consisting of fourteen volumes. He expired in 1760.

Faqih Sahib Daradmand

He was one of the famous poets of Muhammad shah's reign. He was born in the Daccan and brought up in Delhi. He came to Bengal to Nawazish Muhammad Khan, an intimate friend of him. He wrote a Persian Diwan and Saqinamah.[3]

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[1] Ibid, p.15.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid, p. 16.

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Mirza Baqir

His father, Agha Mirza came to Bengal from Iran duriung Alivardi's reign. He was very famous both in writing and speech. He was a good caligraphist and would compose poems occasionally. Hakim Sayyid Hadi Ali Khan taught him the science of medicine.

Murshid Quli Khan Rustamjang Makhmur

Murshid Quli Khan, the son-in-law of Shujau'd-Daulah, the subahdar of Bengal was the deputy governor of Orrisa. He was defeated by Nawab Alivardi Khan in a battle and fled to the Deccan at the court of Asafjah where he earned a respectable position for his poetic excellence. He composed many nice verses. Makhmur was his pen name.

Fakhru'l Tujjar Wajid

Khwaja Wajid was a great merchant of Hughli. But his forefathers originally belonged to Kashmir. He earned a large amount of wealth through his business and so he was known as 'Fakhru'l-Tujjar' that means 'Pride of the Merchants'.[1] He had good relation with Nawab Alivardi Khan. Khwaja Wajid was a very learned man as well as a writer.

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[1] Ibid, p. 17.

Murtaza Quli Khan Firaq

He came to Murshidabad during Nawab Alivardi's reign. He got favours from the Nawab and ultimately settled there. He wrote a Diwan of Persian verses.[1]

Mirza Ashraf Ali Gugah Khan Fughan

He was a foster brother of Ahmad Shah, Mughal Emperor. After the dismissal of Ahmad Shah he went to Murshidabad. But afterwards he settled at Patna and died there in A.H. 1186. That he was very witty and humourour was admitted by almost all tadhkira writers.

Nawab Sayyidu'l-Mulk Asadu'l-Lah Khan Ghalibjang Ghalib

This noble man who was in Murshidabad around A.H. 1180, was a good friend of Yusuf Ali who has mentioned about his (Asadu'l-Lah's) attainments in the field of medicine and poetry.

Hakim Muhammad Shafi Furugh

This eminent physician was born at Shiraz where he studied the courses of Medicine. He came to Murshidabad in A.H.1153 and enjoyed a respectable position among court physicians.

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[1] Ibid, p. 18.

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Yusuf Ali also mentioned in his Zamima the names of Alivardi Khan Mahabatjang, Mir Muhammad Ali, Ali Ibrahim Khan, Haji Ahmad Ali, Sultan Mukarram. The achievments of Alivardi Khan, Mir Muhammad Ali has been discussed earlier and the achievment of Ali Ibrahim have been discussed later. Haji Ahmad Ali and Sultan Mukarram are not so famous as poet.

Muhammad Ali Khan

Muhammad Ali Khan, son of Izzatullah Hidayat ullah khan Ansari, wrote an authentic book on general History named Tarikh-i-Muzaffari.[1] It was written in 1800 A.D.[2] His father held high offices under Farrukhsiyar and Muhammad Reza Khan, the deputy Subahdar of Bengal. The author was himself appointed as Darogha of Faujdari Adalat of Tirhut and Hajipur by Muhammad Reza Khan. Muhammad Ali Khan was a well-known figure and had wide communications with many European officers of his time.[3]

Though the book was named Tarikh-i-Muzaffari after the author's patron, Muhammad Reza Khan Muzaffar Jang, it was not the biography of Muzaffar Jang. The author aimed at

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1. Persian Literature, vol. I, part I, op. cit, p. 144.
2. The History of India as told by its own Historians, op.*cit*, p. 316.
3. Ibid.

describing the history of India at length in this work.[1] Though the work begins from the Muslim conquest of India to the fall of Asafu'd-daula, Nawab of Oudh in 1797 A.D., the incidents before the Emperor Akbar have not been dealt with elaborately. The political activity of Bengal has also not been ignored by the author. This work is so much authentic that Mr. Keene has written a book entitled "The Fall of Mughal Empire" on the basis of it.[2]

The author wrote another book on general history entitled Bahru'l Maw-Waj in 1209 A.H./1794-95 A.D. which is very comprehensive and useful. It is divided into nine chapters and forty-nine sections, fancifully called seas (bahr) and waves (mauj) respectively and hence the title of Bahru-l Mawwaj, "The Tempestuous Sea".[3]

Mirza Jan Tapish

Mirza Muhammad Ismail, popularly known by his pen name Mirza Jan Tapish, son of Mirza Yusuf Beg, received his early education in Delhi. His father came from Bukhara to Delhi and settled there. He acquired good knowledge in Persian and

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[1] Banglar Muslim Budhijibi, op. cit, p. 68.

[2] The History of India as told by its own Historians op. cit, p. 316.

[3] Ibid, p. 235.

Sanskrit and also attained proficiency in prosody. He prepared a Persian work entitled Shamsul Bayan fi Mustalahat-i-Hindustan in 1792 A.D. This work is based on Urdu idioms and proverbs. It was printed from Calcutta in 1839.[1] At the beginning of his career he joined the Army of Jahandar Shah and lived in Lucknow. He was acquainted with Ali Ibrahim Khan, the Chief Justice of Banaras and since that time his poetic career was started. When Jahandar Shah died in 1786 A.D., Jan Tapish came to Murshidabad and here he met Shamsu'd-Daula, Nawab of Dhaka. Later on this acquaintance turned into a deep friendship. Both of them hatched a plan in 1799 A.D. to topple the English regime. This conspiracy was exposed and they were imprisoned for a long period.[2] After release Jan Tapish joined the Fort William College, Calcutta. Here he was given the job of writing and examining the persian manuscripts. He wrote a Urdu poem entitled Kulliat-i-Tapish in 1812 which was published from Fort William College. He wrote its Introduction in Persian. He expired at Calcutta in 1814.[3]

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1. Muhammad Abdullah, Bangladeshe Farsi Sahitya, (Persian Literature in Bangladesh), nineteenth century, Islamic Foundation, Dhaka, 1983, p. 39.
2. Banglar Muslim Buddhijibi, op. cit., p. 89.
3. Ibid.

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Ghulam Yahyah Khan

He was an influential Kazi in the Sadr Nizamat Adalat in Murshidabad. He resigned from his post in protest against the dismissal of Muhammad Reza Khan from the post of Naib-Nazim in 1777. He translated Hidayah, an Arabic work on Muslim law written by Burhanud-Din Ali, into Persian in 1776.[1] This Persian work was again edited and published by Mufti Muhammad Rashid of Salar, Murshidabad, at the instruction of Marquist of Hastings in 1807 A.D.[2]

Muhammad Aslam Panduabhi

He prepared a concise encyclopaedia of Cosmography, Meteorology, Astronomy, Geography, Physiology, Demonogy etc. under the title of Mukhtasir-i-Mufid in 1787.[3] He is said to be one of seven Munshis referred to by Shaikh Itisamuddin. From his surname, it is presumed that he belonged to Pandua.[4]

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1. Ibid, p. 86.
2. Catalogue of Books in Oriental Languages in the Library of the Board of Examiners, Late College of Fort William, prepared undr the superintendent of Lieutenant Ranking, Calcutta, 1903, p. 1.
3. Ibid, p. 363.
4. Banglar Muslim Buddhijibi, op. cit., p. 86.

Ali Ibrahim

Ali Ibrahim was born at Shaikhpura in Munger district but he was brought up in Murshidabad and spent main part of his life there and died at Banaras in 1793 A.D. He married the dauther of Yusuf Ali (Historian).[1] He was not only an influential politician but also a great writer. He was a great noble at the court of Mir Qasim and was considered to be one of the aristocrats and reverend personalities of his time. Because of his polite behaviour, refined manners and profound erudition, he attained due veneration from the English people. Once he was invited by Sir William Jones, president of the Asiatic Society in Calcutta, shortly after the foundation of the society. He gave a talk in Persian on 'Forms of Oaths held Binding the Hindus'. This was translated into English and published in Asiatic Researches (vol. I, 1788) by William Jones.[2] He held many important posts during his life time. Once after the defeat of Mir Qasim he had to lead a life of a vagabond for sometime. He was given assurance and protection by Mirza Kazim, so he came back to Murshidabad and was received by the favourites and friends of Muhammad Reza Khan. After having replaced

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[1] Bengal Nawabs, op. cit., p. 79

[2] Asiatic Researches, London, vol. I, 1788, pp. 289-90.

Raj Ballabh, he was appointed as Dewan-i-Sarkar of Nizamat family by Muhammad Reza Khan in 1770 A.D. In 1772 A.D. When Reza was arrested, he was offered the post of Naib-Nazim of Bengal by Hastings but he refused it, out of gratitude towards Muhammad Reza Khan. He accompained Hastings at the time of Banaras expedition in 1781 A.D. He was appointed Chief Justice in the Dewani court of Banaras, replacing Chitya Singh. He became Chief magistrate during the tenure of Cornwallis. He died at Banaras in 1783 A.D.

As a writer he was as famous as Ghulam Husain Tabatabai. His main interest was history of literature and was not keen to write political history.[1] He produced the following works. 1. Gulzar-i-Ibrahim (1784 A.D.), 2. Suhuf-i-Ibrahim (1790 A.D.), 3. Khulasat-ul-Kalam, 4. Waqai Jang-i-Marhatta.

The first work, written in Persian, is the history of Urdu literature, most of it was written in Murshidabad and completed in Banaras. It is an important work to know the cultural history of Murshidabad and patna. In this work the author has described the biography of about three hundred urdu poets with a brief description of their literary works.

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[1] Banglar Muslim Buddhijibi, op. cits., p. 88.

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At the instruction of Gillchrist, professor of Fort William College, Munshi Mirza Ali Lutuf translated the work into Urdu under the title of Gulshan-i-Hind in 1801 A.D. Suhuf-i-Ibrahim and Khulasat-ul-Kalam are the two works on the life and works of Persian poets. Ali Ibrahim himself was a poet and his title was Khalil.

Waqai-Jang-i-Marhatta is the account of Maratha war. It was completed in 1786. Major Fuller translated this work into English under the title of Tarikh-i-Ibrahim Khan. In the introduction of this work Ali Ibrahim extolled Lord Cornawallis to the skies.[1]

Nigarnama-i-Hind and Imad us Sa-adat of Ali Ibrahim[2] are the two historical works, the former deals with the third battle of Panipat, the later discusses the life history of Sa-adat Ali, Nawab of Oudh and his progeny.

Ghulam Husain Salim

Ghulam Husain Zaydpuri surnamed salim was a great historian. He was born at Saydpur in oudh. He worked as Dak-

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1. The History of India as told by its own Historians, op. cit., p. 257.
2. Banglar Muslim Buddhijibi, op. cit, p. 88. But Elliot an Dowson say that these two books - Nigarnama-i-Hind and Imad us Sa'adat were written by Saiyed Ghulam Ali (The History of India as told by its own Historians, vol. VIII, op. cit., pp. 394 & 396).

Munshi under Jeorge Woodney at Malda. He was entrusted with the duty of preserving important letters, deeds of agreements and many other valuable documents and records. This is why he got a chance to have an access to many important manuscripts and documents. He also collected many informations from the delapidated edifices. At last he compiled all these informations systematically, at the instruction of Jeorge Woodney, which resulted in an immortal work entitled Riyazu-s-Salatin. It is a remarkable history of Bengal. 'The Riyazu-s-Salatin', in the words of Professor Blochmann, 'is much prized as being the fullest account in Persian of the Muhammadan History of Bengal, which the author brings down to his own time (1786-88)'.[1] It effectively guides the reader to the additional information such as culture and civilization of the Muslims, their system and method of administration. The other historians wrote only on certain period of the history of Bengal. But Ghulam Husain gives the history of Bengal from earliest period to the dawn of the British rule giving more emphasis to the Muslim period of Bengal.

The meaning of Riyaz in Persian is 'garden' and Salatin means 'kings'. So Riyazu-s-Salatin means 'garden of kings'.

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1. Riyazu-s-Salatin, op. cit., preface.

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The work contains a chronogram yielding 1202 A.H., correspondong to 1788 A.D., the year in which this historical work was completed. Section I of the Introduction of Riyazu-s-Salatin gives an account of the boundaries and environs of Bengal but its section II provides the description of certain characteristic of Bengal. Section III deals with the description of certain towns and foundation of certain cities of Bengal (like Calcutta, Murshidabad, Purniah, Dhaka) as well as various forts and forests. Section IV traces the rule of the Hindu Chiefs or Raian over Bengal during the ancient time. Its chapter I is related to the description of Muslim rulers who remained viceroys of the emperors of Delhi but chapter II deals with the Muslim Kings who mounted the thrown of Bengal and the Khutbah was recited in their names. Chapter III represents a description of the Nazims who were appointed to the Nizamat of Bengal by the Mughal emperors. Its chapter IV is divided into two parts. First part provides a description of the arrival of the Christians (Portuguese and French) in Deccan and in Bengal but its second part is related to the domination of the English Christians over Bengal and Deccan.

Nawab Nusrat Jang

After the death of his brother Hashmat Jang, he was appointed Naib-Nazim of Dhaka, under the English Government in 1785 A.D. He was on his post for thirty seven years with pomp and glory. He died in the year 1822 A.D. His handwriting in Arabic and Persian was excellent. He used to teach the student and write the subject matters beautifully with his own hand. His daily routine was to recite Quran, Tasbih and Wazifa. He composed Tarikh-i-Jahangir Nagar which is the concise political history of Dhaka, starting from the reign of Emperor Akbar (1556-1605) to Nawab Hashmat Jang (1785-86).[1] Many historians had admitted its importance.

Q Kudratullah and Farhatullah

Kudratullah and Farhatullah were two Persian poets at the court of Nawab Sirajud-Daula. Both of them earned fame by composing Persian Diwan.[2] Q Kudratullah was an inhabitant of Jahanabad in Delhi and came to Murshidabad during the reign of Muhammad Shah (1719-48 A.D.) and spent the rest of his life there. He died in 1790 A.D. Farhatullah died in 1777 A.D.

There may be some other writings in Arabic and Persian but inspite of my hard efforts I could not come across with them. However, the above mentioned works are enough to portray the developments took place in the field of literature.

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1. Bangaladeshe Farsi Sahitya op. cit., p. 120.
2 Banglar Muslim Buddhijibi, op. cit., p. 57.

CHAPTER - V

CONTRIBUTION OF MUSLIMS TO BENGALI LITERATURE DURING EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

CONTRIBUTION OF MUSLIMS TO BENGALI LITERATURE DURING EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Bengal is a land of rivers. Its fertile soil has not only given prosperity to the land but also produced many outstanding genii. It has also attracted many versetile scholars, by its solemn beauty, from other parts of the world.

There is no satisfactory evidence of Muslim Bengali writing before sixteenth century.[1] The Muslim writers did not want to write religious themes in Bengali as they thought that the use of another language except Arabic would be a sin. They adopted it from their Hindu counterpart but their literary efforts followed quite two different paths. The Hindus were mainly concerned with themes related to Gods and Goddesses and their incarnations. Where as the Muslims derived their inspirations and themes from Persian and Arabic sources and their subjects were related to religious matters and moral teachings. Historical and romantic themes were also popular. They tried to make the common people understand the complex religious' matters by translating into Bengali. The aim of their writings was to propagate the knowledge of Islam and Islamic traditions.

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[1] M. Mohar Ali. History of the Muslims of Bengal, vol. I B, Riyadh, 1985, p. 860.

Eighteenth century was a period of political termoil in Bengal. The writers observed the degeneration and destruction of the society. Under such poor condition no great work could be produced. Even then in this period, a number of poets and poetic works were produced compared to any other period.[1] Bengal's contribution to Islamic Studies can not be accomplished satisfactorily with out referring to their contributions. So a brief account of their life and achievements are given in this chapter.

Sayyid Muhammad Akbar

He was a poet and was born in 1657 and most probably died in 1720.[2] He is thought to have belonged to Tripura as most of the manuscripts of his puthi (works) have been recovered from this district. Only one work entitled Zebulmulk Shamarukh, on love theme, has so for been discovered.[3] That the poet was well versed in Persian is evident from his writing.[4]

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1. Wakil Ahmed, Bengla Literature in eighteenth century, History of Bangladesh (1704-1971), vol. III, Social and Cultural History, edited by Sirajul Islam, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Dhaka, 1992, p. 379.
2. Monsur Musa, Muhammad Enamul Haque Rachanavali, Dhaka, 1991, p. 370.
3. It is evident from the chronogram of his writings that the work was written in 1673 A.D. or 1084 A.H.
4. Muhammad Enamul Haque Rachanavali, op.cit., p.370.

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Sukur Mahmud

Sukur Mahmud, an inhabitant of Sindur-Kusumi village in Rajshahi, came of a Faqir (Sufi) family. His father, Anwar was a Faqir (Sufi). As regard the date of birth, there is some controversy. It is assumed that he might have born in 1660 A.D.[1] But Dr. Enamul Haque says that poet might have lived in 1680 A.D. - 1750 A.D.[2] He composed a famous work entitled Mainamotir Gan in 1705 A.D. which is based on the story of Gopichandra, king of Tripura and his queen Mainamati. How young king Gupichandra, leaving behind a luxurious life, adopted the difficult life of a saint for the sake of his salvation, is the main concern of the work. Besides this, many complex spiritual matters have been discussed in it. This work has been edited and published.

Abdul Karim Khandekar

Arakan court was a famous site for the cultivation of Bengali literature, where many muslim poets found shelter as well as patronage. Abdul Karim Khandekar was one of them. He was an inhabitant of Arakan. His great grand father Ramaj

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1. Sukur Mahmood, Gupichandrer Saunyas, edited by A.K.M. Zakaria, Bangla Academy, Dhaka, 1974, p. 130.

2. Muhammad Enamul Haque Rachanavali, op. cit., p. 371.

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Mian was a collector of sea customs in Rosanga. Abdul Karim Khandekar composed several famous works. The following are the important works- Dulla Majlish: He composed this work at Mrohaunga, the capital of Rosanga, at the instruction of Atibur, one of the courtiers of Rosanga, in 1705 A.D.[1] This work was composed on the basis of a Persian work. In it, he has described the lives of many prophets like Adam (a.s.), Ibrahim (a.s.), Lat (a.s.), Shaib (a.s.), Musa (a.s), Sulaiman (a.s.), Isa (a.s.) and Muhammad (PBUH). Apart from prophets, he has also discussed about the life of many Sahabis and Sufis like Hazrat Ali, Hazrat Khalid, Hazrat Bilal, Hasan Basri, etc. Description of Heaven, Namaz and Roza has also been included in this work. It also gives a gerneral conception of the cultural aspect of Arakan.

Hazar Masail : This work was borrowed from a Persion work of the same name which was based on Fiqh.[2] Nur Nama : How Prophet Muhammad was created from 'Nur' is the main theme of this work.[3]

Muhammad Yakub

He originally belonged to Zikirpur village under Bashirhat sub-division in 24 pargana . He spent most of his

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1. Ibid, p. 359. In this same book in p.No. 366, the year of composition of Dulla Majlish is mention as 1698 A.D.
2. Muhammad Enamul Haque Rachanavali, op. cit, p. 366.
3. Ibid.

life at Balia in Hugli where he happened to meet Sufi Garibullah. He is said to have written the last part of Jangnama in 1694 A.D., the first part of which was written by Sufi Garibullah.[1] It is a voluminous book and was written from a Persian work named 'Maktul Husain'.

Gharibullah

Maqtal / Q

Muhammad Raza

Muhammad Raza was born at the juncture of the Mughal and the English reign. Accoriding to Sattya Barta (a magazin) the poet was born ~~at~~ Bakhatpur village under Phatikchari police station in Chittagong.[2] The pedigree, available from his ancestors, says that the poet was born in 1691 and died in 1767.[3] The poet wrote two works on love theme, Tamim Golal-O-Chaturno Chillal and Mishri Jamal. The former one narrates that Tamim Golal, prince of Shimal fell in love with Chaturno-Chillal, princess of Shiraj, in the dream. Tamim Golal after having fulfilled five conditions put before him ultimately gained Chaturna Chillal.

The later work describes the love affairs between Toram Hameem, prince of Bimal Nagar and Misri Jamal, princess of Kurbar.

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1. Muhammad Enamul Haque Rachanavali, op. cit, p. 350.
2. Ibid, p. 386.
3. Ibid.

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These two books gained much popularity because of its beautiful romantic theme.[1]

Ali Raza (Kanu Faqir)

Ali Raza, one of the sufi-poets of eighteenth century was born at Oskhaine village under Anwara police station in Chittagong. Dr. Enamul Haque says that the poet was born in 1695 A.D. and died in 1780 A.D. The grave of the poet located at the same village and his discendants are still living there.[2]

Though he was a sufi, he did not dissociate himself from family life. He had more than one wives and many children. The following books written by him have so far been discovered :

Agam, Ynan Sagar, Dhayan Mala, Yoga Kalander, Siraj-Kulub, Satchkraved. Besides these, he composed many Marfati songs. Agam and Ynan-Sagar are not separate books but separate chapters of the same book.[3] In this book the poet has discussed elaborately about sufi philosophy, Baisnab

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1. Azhar Islam, Madhya yuger Bangla Sahitye Muslim Kabi, Bangla Academy, Dhaka 1992, p. 233.
2. Muhammad Enamul Haque Rachanavali, op. cit, p. 388.
3. Ibid, p. 311.

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philosophy, Yoga etc. and he attempted to show co-relation between them Ynan Sagar has been edited by Bangya Sahitya Parishad.

Qulub

Siraj-Kulub is based on Persian work and consists of the matter of Sharia (Islamic Law). In Satchakraved he has discussed about Yoga practices. On the whole the poet aimed at integrating Muslim Sufism and Hindu Yoga in the same manner as Dara Shikoh did in Majma-ul-Bahrain.

Kazi Shaikh Mansur

He was a poet and belonged to a Shaikh family of Chittagong. His father Isha was a Kazi by profession. The poet composed a work entittled Sirnama based on a Persian Kitab Ashrarul Mosha[1], discussing in detail various religious matters relating to Islam and secrets of mysticism. The book is divided into nine chapters. It discusses Sufi philosophy, the origin development and the final stage of Sufism. It is a very important source to trace the Society, culture, and religion of the Muslims of Bengal during sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth century.[2]

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1. Muhammad Enamul Haque Rachanavali, op .cit., p. 350.
2. Ahmad Sharif, Banglar Sufi Sahitya, Dacca, 1969, p. 137.

It really deserves, considering its diversified nature, enormous volume and expert representation of the subject matter, to be called as an encyclopaedia on Sufism.[1] This work was written in the year 1703 A.D.[2] which is evident from his writings. So the poet is thought to have lived between the last part of seventeenth and first part of eighteenth century.

Muhammad Uzir Ali

Muhammad Uzir ali was born at Charia village under Hathazari police station in Chittagong. The poet had an aristocratic bearing. His elder brother, Nazir had a dignified personality and he was honourably called Shahzada by the local people. He established a famous market, "Nazir hat" after his name.

The poet got incentive from his brother and wrote a voluminious work named "Nasal-E-Usman-Islamabad", As per Dr. Ahmad Sharif the poet had started writtting this poem in 1713 A.D. and completed in 1719 A.D.[3]. According to Dr.

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1. Madhya Yuger Bangla Sahitye Muslim Kabi op. cit, p. 239.

2. Muhammad Enamul Haque Rachanvali, op. cit., p. 350.

3. Dr. Ahmad Sharif, Bangalee-O-Bangla Sahitya, part II, Dhaka, 1978, 718

Enamul Haque the writing of this verse was began in 1711 A.D. and finished in 1718.[1]

Usman, One of the four orthodox Caliphs belonged to Umayya. Some people from this family came to Islamabad to preach Islam and subsequently they settled and flourished there. The poet had regarded himself as the progeny of this dynasty. Genealogical account of caliph Usman, commendation of Nazir Ali, visit of Hazat Ali to Islamabad, battle. preparation of Gopichandra against Islamabad, conflict between Gopichandra and Shah and Gopichandra's victory in the battle, Hazrat Badruddin's going into meditation and ultimate success in this endeavour, description of Baghdad city, conspiracy of Firingi against the Emperer of Delhi all these historical incidents have been included in this poem. The poetic imagination has freqently exceeded the historical facts. Most of the poets in the medieval period, according to Dr. Sharif were in the habit of proliferating any description unnecessarily just to increase the girth of their volume. The poet Uzir Ali was also not exempted in this respect.

Apart from Nasal-E-Usman-Islamabad he also composed and epic named Sayyat-Kumar.[2]

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1. Muhammad Enamul Haque Rachanavali, op. cit, p. 352.
2. Ibid.

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Afzal Ali

Afzal Ali, a Chitagonian poet is said to have existed sometime between 1738-1811 A.D.[1] He wrote Nasihatnama in which he has warned that tobaco smoking is a sinful act and the smoker will face fatal consequences. It is a serious work based on moral themes.

Ghulam Rasul

He was an inhabitant of Sukdebpur village in Dinajpur. The poet had to shift to Rani-Bhabanipur village under Umbari pargana due to some unavoidable circumstances. He, at the request of his well wishers, composed ~~O~~afathnama. Earlier the poet composed the first part of Rasul Vijaya, later on he completed this work by adding Ofatname to it.[2] It was complted in 1790 which in mentioned in his writings[3].

Shaikh Chand

Shaikh Chand, an inhabitant of Comilla, belonged to the first part of 18th century. He wrote a mumber of works entilled Rasul Vijaya, describing the life and achievements of the prophet (P.B.U.H.), Shah Daulahnama, written in honour of his "guru", and Qiyamat Nama, narrating the Day of Judgement in the hereafter. The last named work was completed in 1734 A.D.

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[1] Dr. Ahmad Sharif, Madhyajugeer Sahitye Samaj-O-Sanskriter Rup, Muktadhara, Swadhin Bangla Sahitya Parishad, Dacca, 1977, p. 429.

[2] Muhammad Abu Talib, Bangla Kabbaye Islami Renaissance, Islamic Foundation, Bangaladesh, 1984, p. 211.

[3] Ibid, p. 210.

BURHANULLA h

There were two persons named Burhanullah. One Burhanullah composed Qiyamat Nama in 1747.[1] The other Burhanullah, an inhabitant of Nokhar village in Dinajpur district, wrote a number of works entitled[2] -

1. Nabi Nama (1790-1802).
2. Ahkamul Islam.
3. Musalmaneer Khabar
4. Hetujuan.
5. Hindu Dharmajati.
6. Japarshar Khat.
7. Gokul Chand Chaudhuri Prasasti.

Gharibullah

Faqir Garibullah

Faqir Garibullah was born in 1670 at Hafezpur village in Howrah district. His father Shah Azm~~o~~atullah came to India from Baghdad in order to preach Islam. He was a great

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[1] Ibid, p. 246.

[2] Ibid, p. 257.

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Sufi and said to be the descendant of Hazrat Ali.[1]

Shah Garibullah got his early education from his father. His father having noticed poetic talent in him encouraged him to write poetry and wanted him to propagate the message of religion in the form of folk-lore, written in the language used by the common people. Having been stimulated by his father he composed many poems. So far five books written by him, have been discoverd. These are (1) Jangnama written in the yuear 1694 (1101 in Bengali Calender).

(2) Amir Hamza (Part I) written in 1765-66 (Approximately).
(3) Sonavan in 1720 (1127 in Bengali calender).
(4) Satya Peer-er Puthi.
(5) Yusuf-Zulekha.

As regards the writer of Sonavan there are different views. According to Dr. Muhammad Shahidullah, it is no doubt the work is of Faqir Garibullah.[2] Dr. Enamul Haque does not support this view. He is of the opinion that it is the 5th and last work of Sayyid Hamza.[3]

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1. Sadique Muhammad, Shah Sambad, Shah Sambad, (Smarak Patrika)edited and published by Sadique Muhammad, Howrah, 1989, year 1, vol. I, Feb., p. 10.
2. Dr. Muhammad Shahidullah, Bangla Sahityr Katha, vol. II, Dhaka, 1967 A.D., pp. 301-302.
3. Dr. Muhammad Enamul Haque, Muslim Bangla Sahitya, Dhaka, 1968, p. 294.

Sonavan is a war-poem. It is the account of a conflict between the great hero Hanif, son of Hazrat Ali and the great heroine Sonavan. Having witnessed the horrible appearance of Hanif even Shiva, the God of destruction in Hindu mythology trembles with fear. These are all figments of imagination.

Shah Garibullah got inspiration to write 'Amir Hamza from Urdu poetry, 'Dastan-e-Amir Hamza'[1] Amir Hamza was not completed during his life time. It was completed later on by his disciple Sayyid Hamza. In this poem he has given a super-natural description of the courage of Amir Hamza, uncle of prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H).

Yusuf Zulekha is an account of love affairs of Yusuf and Zulekha. In this poetry he has made an attempt to glorify the spiritual life and there is preponderance of morality in it.

In Jangnama Garibullah has decribed the tragic incidence of Karbala. Here he described incredible properties to the characters of his poetry.

Shah Garibullah has also written a verse on Satya Peer named Satya Peerer-Puthi Madan Kamdeb Pala. In it he has described the glory of Satya Peer as well the story of Madan Kamdeb. Here he has described many mircles of Satya Peer who has revived the hero of this story three times after his death.

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[1] Dr. Ghulam Saklayen, Faqir Garibullah, Bangla Academi Patrika, Kartick-Pous, Dhaka, 1368 (in Bengali Calender) p.26

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It is admitted in all hands that Garibullah was pioneer in 'Dobhasi Literature'.[1] He was such a powerful personality that under his influence many new talents were found to flourish. As regards his influence, the comments of Shri Rabindra Chopra published in "Islamic Review" are worth mentioning, "Garibullah's school influenced the writings of some of the Hindu poets belonging to west Bengal. It is quite natural that the best known Bengali poet of the eighteenth century, Bharat Chandra was endebted to these Muslim writers".[2]

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[1] This Bengali language was composed with a mixture of Urdu, Hindi, Arabic and Persian words. According to Wakil Ahmad (Bangla Literature in eighteenth century, History of Bangladesh (1704-1971), vol. III, Social and Cultural History, Asiatic society of Bangladesh, 1992, p. 359), "The blend of Arabic, Persian and Hindi words in the poems and linguistic expressions and sentence structure introduced a new trend in Bangla literature in the eighteenth centry. James long termed the language of the dobhashi puthi as Musalmani Bangla, Sukumar Sen called it Islamic Bangla while Anisuzzaman called it Mirsa Bhasha. This language was used for literary purpose. But It was also used by the traders and the working class people of Calcutta.

[2] Rabindra Chopra, Sufi poets of Bengal, Islamic Review, London, February, 1960.

Like his father he was also a great Sufi. He had many disciples. He was not so popular to the common people as a poet as he was to them as a saint.

He expired on the 11th Kartick in the year 1770. His death anniversary (Urs) is observed every year on 11th Kartick.[1]

Sayyid Hamza

Sayyid Hamza was an ideal disciple of Shah Garibullah. He was born in the year 1733 A.D. (1140 in Bengali Calender) at Udana village in Bhurshat pargana of West Bengal. He spent eighteen years of his life at Basantpur village in Howrah district. There he was engaged in teaching profession and composed all his poetry during that time. He died at Basantpur in 1807 A.D. (1214 in Bengali calender)[2] .

He acquired good knowledge of Persian during his student life. He started composing verse even when he was young. The first poem which he wrote in pure Bengali was Madhumalati. Accoriding to Muhammad Azhar Islam, he started writing in 1189 (Bengali calender) and completed in 1195

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1. Syed Abdus Sattar, Diwanjee: Bakti-o-Kimbadanti, Shah Shambad, op cit., pp.22-23.

2. Ashok Kundu, Syed Hamza, Shah Sambad, op. cit. p. 28.

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(Bengali Calender)[1]. Its theme was taken from a Persian or Hindi poetry, in which he described the love affairs between the prince Monohar and the princess Modhumalati.

The second poem was Amir Hamza (II vol.). He completed the unfinished work of his 'guru' in the year 1794 A.D.-1795 A.D. (1201 in Bengali Calender). This work is divided into sixty five chapters starting from the fight of Emperor Nawserah and Jesipher to the killing of Amir Hamza by Henda. In this verse he has beautifully intermingled humour with heroism. The matter of this poetry is the war between Bibi Zaitun, daughter of Chandal Shah and Muhammad Hanif, son of Hazrat Ali. Though the verse is full of war and romanticism the main aim of the poet was to preach and glorify Islam.[2] Because of this, sometimes he has resorted to imagination.

His last poem was Hatim Tai written in the year 1804 A.D. (1210 B.S.). Hatim Tai was a great warrior and poet of Arabia in the Pre-Islamic era. It is the Bengali translation of Urdu Araish Mahafil'. The poet got inspiration from Erjatullah to write it.

The influence of Persian and Arabic literature is present everywhere in his poetry except the first one i.e., Madhumalati.

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[1] Madhya Yuger Bangla Sahitye Muslim Kabi, pp. 225-226.

[2] Ibid, p. 229.

Shaikh Sadi

There are different views regarding the birth place of Shaikh Sadi. Dr. Enamul Haque says that the poet was an inhabitant of Tripura.[1] But Dr. Ahmad Sharif states that the poet would work at Tripura court and his paternal home was in Chittagong.[2]

The poet wrote an interesting epic called Gada Mallika in 1712 A.D.[3] So he is thought to be the poet of the first half of eighteenth century. The subject matter of the puthi is as follows: Princess of Rome, Mallika, after having attained profound knowledge, vowed that she would marry the person who would be able to give correct answers to her thousand queries. So many young chaps came and went back disappointed. At last one Gada or Faqir from Turkey, Abdullah by name, succeeded, so the princess took him for husband. Under the guise of Romantic theme the poet has described many religious matters.[4] The poet made some prophesy regarding the modern era which has all come true. This reveals that the poet was a wise man.

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1. Muhammad Enamul Haque Rachanvali, op. cit., p. 371.
2. Bangalee-O-Bangla Sahitya, op. cit. p. 663.
3. Muhammad Enamul Haque Rachanavali, op. cit., 371.
4. Madhya Yuger Bangla Sahitye Muslim Kabi,op.cit, p. 241.

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Sherbaz

He belonged to Tripura. His three books have hitherto been recovered from Tripura. They are Fakkarnama or Mallikar Hazar Sawal, Kasemer Larai, Fatemar Suratnama.[1]

Hayat Mahmood

With the fall of Nawab Sirajuddawla at the battle of Plassey when the glory of Bengal was set in the water of the Ganges, that time poet Hayat Mahmood had kept himself busy within a thatched hut in a remote village of North Bengal in the creation of an immortal literature, as if an humble attempt to soothe the soring hearts of the *people of Bengal, caused by the recent loss of independence.* It is the credit of Maulavi Mansuruddin, M.A. who first brought the poet, so long unsung and unnoticed, to the light.

Hayat Mahmood was a powerful poet in the last part of the Mughal reign. He was born at Jhar Bishila village under Pir Gong police station in Rangpur district of North Bengal. His father Shah Kabir, Diwan of Ghora Ghat was also famous for his poetic excellence. As regards the date of birth of the poet, it might be in 1680-1690.[2] According to Enamul

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1. Muhammad Enamul haque, Rachanavali, op. cit., p. 371.
2. Madhya Yuger Bangla Sahitye Muslim Kabi, p. 202.

Haque it might be in the year of 1697.[1] The poet was a famous Alim and proficient in Persian, Nagri and Bengali languages. He was a great orator as well. His oration on religious theme could reach the core of hearts of millions of audiences. So far four books written by Hayat Mahmood have been recovered[2]. A brief description of each was given here.

Jangnama was composed in 1723.[3] In this poem the poet has given a very pathetic description of the heart-breaking incidents of Karbala. How thirsty Hazrat Hussain was brutally beheaded in the desert of Karbala, merciless killing of Qasim, son of Hazrat Hasan, heart rending lamentation of prematurely widowed Sakina and unbearable death agony of poisoned Hassan. All these have been pathetically expressed by Zibril, the angel to Muhammad (Peace be upon him), the Prophet.

His second verse Chittya-Uththan was written in 1732.[4] It has been written on the basis of "Hitopodesh" written by

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1. Muhammed Enamul Haque, Monisha Manjusha, vol. I, Muktadhara, Swadhin Bangla Sahitya Parishad, Dhaka, 1975, p. 131.
2. Muhammed Enamul Haque, Rachanavali, op. cit, p. 353.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.

Bishnu Sharma in Sanskrit. According to Sukumer Sen, it is not composed directly from Sanskrit *Hitopadesh* but from its Parsian version.[1]

Hitogan Bani was his third work and written in 1753.[2] It is a splendid resource of morals. Like Hindu Sanghita, it can be termed as Muslim Sanghita. It is not so valuable in the field of literature as it is in the field of religion.

Ambia Bani was his last work and written in the year 1757.[3] It was the product of his old age and more voluminous than those of his other books. Of course its value does not lie in its vastness but in its palatable contents. The poet was basically a renowned Alim and had long been haunted by this idea that his poetic talent should be utilised in the propagation of the message of Islam so he undertook this Herculean task of composing Ambia Bani but because of his advanced age he could not cover it to his satisfaction.

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[1] *Madhya Yuger Bangla Sahitye Muslim Kabi*, p. 203.

[2] *Muhammed Enamul Haque Rachanavali*, op. cit, p. 353.

[3] Muhammed Enamul Haque, *Monisha Manjusha*, vol. I, p. 131, Enamul Haque says in *Muslim Bangla Sahitya*, that it was written in 1758 (*Muhammad Enamul Haque Rachanavali*, p. 353), Azhar Islam saysin *Madhya Yuger Bangla Sahitye Muslim Kabi*, p.201 that it was written in 1758.

Though Ambia Bani is based on religious theme, it has not dwindled its literary value. It cannot be said that Hayat Mahmood was the only person who first ventured to write on religious theme. This type of example abounds in ancient Bengali literature.

At the beginning of this book he has narrated the creation of Nur(The Light) of Muhammad (P.B.U.H.)by Allah, then from a bit of it the creation of the whole Universe including Heavens and Hells. He has given a beautiful account of how Adam and Eva were expelled from the Heaven for the breach of promise made to Allah, which has been followed by biographical accounts of some prominent prophets like Hazrat Adam, Hazrat Shis, Hazrat Idris, Hazrat Nooha, Hazrat Hud, Hazrat Saleh, Hazrat Ibrahim Hazrat Ismail, Hazrat Ishaq and lastly Hazrat Muhammad (P.B.U.H.)). He has stated very enthusiastically the journey of Prophet to the Paradise accompanied by ~~Z~~Jibril riding on Burrak. One thing should be noted with admiration here that though there was ample scope to resort to exaggeration specially in describing the scenery of the Paradise but the poet has shown here a commendable restraint. He has given a measured yet accurate and charming description which shows his actual originality. Many ingredients scattered in the vast field of muslim literature which was so far neglected or considered to be triffling, have become transformed through the magic words of poet Hayat Mahmood into a beautiful poetry which truely manifests his scintillating genius.

Sayyid Nuruddin

Sayyid Nuruddin, son of Sayyid Aziz, was a resident of Chittagong. He belonged to the last half of the eighteenth century. His work entitled Daqaequl Heqaiq was written in the year 1790 A.D. as mentioned in the work itself.[1] This work is based on Kanz-ud-Daqaiq, an Arabic book on Fiqh written by Imam Hafizud-Din Abul Barkat Abdullah bin Ahmad Nasfee (710 A.H/1310 A.D.). It is a very voluminous work containing 22 chapters. It deals with various religious matters relating to death, Azrail (the angel of death) Ruh(Soul of death), lamentation of a dying person, agony of a sinner in the grave.

Another work entitled Rahatul Qulub or Qeyamatnama is written on matters extracted from Quran, Hadith and commentaries of Quran, which has dwelt at lenght on Qeyamat, Namaz, Roza, Heaven and Hell, responsibilities towards parents. All such things as are needed to lead an Islamic life in accordance with Sharia, have been beautifully presented in this work.

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[1] Muhammad Enamul Haque Rachanavali, op. cit, p. 394.

In Hitopodesh or Burhanul Arefin, written in 1796 A.D., the poet has discussed about Tasawwuf. It shows that the poet was not only a great Aleem but also well-conversant with the knowledge of Tasawwuf.[1] Musar Sawal is a booklet consisting of conversations of Musa, the prophet, with the Almighty Allah.

Most of the scholars are of the opinion that Sayyid Nuruddin is the best of those Muslim writers who have written on religious theme in the Medieval Bengali literature.[2]

Muhammad ~~K~~Qasim

Muhammad ~~K~~Qasim, son of Abdul Aziz, was born at Jugidia in Noakhali. Three books written by him have been discovered so far. They are Siraj ul Qulub, Hitopodesh, Sultan Jamjama. Most of the Bengali Muslims are ignorant of Arabic language. In order to propagate the message of religion in Bengali, to them, he wrote Siraj ul Qulub in the poetic form, narrating religious matters like Namaz, Roza, Sura Fateha, Bismillah,

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1. Muhammad Enamul Haque Rachanavali, op. cit , p. 395.
2. Madhya Yuger Bangla Shaitye Muslim Kabi, op. cit, p. 253.

duties and responsibilities towards parents etc. This work was written in 1790 A.d.[1]

Hitopodesh, is a work on Tasawwuf based on Burhanul Arifin in Arabic.

In Sultan Jamjama he has discussed about how the Sultan Jamjama regained his life after death through the efforts of the prophet Isa (a.s). He has also shown that every human being is bound to suffer for his sinful acts after death.

Nawazish Khan

He belonged to Sukhchari village under Satkania police station in Chittagong. One of his descendants stated that the poet died in 1765 A.D.[2] The poet is thought to have existed in the first half of eighteenth century.[3] The poet wrote three books- (1) Pathan Prasansa, (2) Jorwar Singh Kirti and (3) Gul-e-Baqauli. The first two works are of historical nature, the third one is a romantic work. Gul-e-Baqauli was composed sometime between 1730 A.D. - 1750 A.D.[4] at the request of Baddyanath Roy, Zamindar of Ranigram in Chittagong.

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1. Muhammad Enamul Haque Rachanavali, op. cit., p. 393.
2. Bangalee-O-Bangla Sahitya, op. cit., p. 519.
3. Ibid, p. 520.
4. Ibid.

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In Pathan Prasansa, the poet has described the family history of a Chittagong governor named Hussain Khan.

Jorwar Sing Kirti narrates the family history of the founder of Jorwargong Zamindari. The poet also wrote religious work named Baiyenat.

Muhammad Muqim

Muhammad Muqim was an inhabitant of Nayyapara village under Raugan police station in Chittagong which is known from one of his works entitled Faidul Muqtadee. The poet's forefathers originally belonged to Pheny in Noakhali. Some political disturbances made them shift to Chittagong. The poet lost his father, Sayyid Muhammad Daulat in his boyhood and was subsequently brought up by some Jiban Husain Choudhury.

One of his famous works entitled Gul-e-Bakauli was written sometime around 1760 A.D. on the basis of a famous Persian book Tajul Bakauli.[1] This romantic work is not a mere transtation from a Persian but it also contains original contribution of the poet. Dr. Ahmad Sharif regards Gul-e-Bakauli as the first and only work of Muhammad Muqim.[2]

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1. Madhya Yuger Bangla Sahitye Muslim Kabi, op. cit., p. 250.
2. Bangalee-o-Bangla Sahitya, op. cit., p. 537.

After wards Faidul Muqtadi has also been traced. Faidul Muqtadi, written in 1773 A.D., is a religious work, suggesting duties and responsibilities of a Muslim. In the Introduction of this book, the poet has mentioned about his other three works entitled Kalakam, Mrigabati and Ayyub Nabir Katha, manuscripts of these work have not yet been discovered. These are thought to have been written on religious theme at the instruction of his preceptor, Ali Raza. The poet was well-versed in many subjects, like Astrology, Music in Hindu as well as Muslim scriptures. His talent can only be compared with Alaol's.[1]

From the date of composition of his works, the poet is thought to belong to the second half of eighteenth century.

Muhammad Ali

He was a famous poet and one of those who had written on Fiqh. He was an inhabitant of Idilpur village under Faticchari police station in Chittagong.[2] He was contemporary of Muhammad Muqim.[3] He wrote Hairat ul Fiqh, at the instruction of Yusuf Hafeez, Zamindar of Lelung, which

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1. Muhammad Enamul Haque Rachanavali, op. cit, p. 390
2. Bangalee-o-Bangla Sahitya, op. cit, p. 526.
3. Muhammad Enamul Haque Rachanavali, op. cit., p. 392.

deals with religious matters related to Fiqh. Having been inspired by some Yar Ali, he wrote a romantic theme, Husn Banu. He wrote another work entitled Shahpari Mallikzada, at the request of some Ameer Hussain.[1] Besides these, three verses on Radha-Krishna are also available.[2]

Paragol

The poet was an inhabitant of Chittagong. Muhammad Muqim, another poet, belonging to the second half of eighteenth century has mentioned the above poet as his predecessor. So the poet is thought to have belonged to first half of eighteenth century. He had written a verse named Shah Parir Ketchcha based on a fairy tale in Persian by Nizami Ganjbir (1140 A.D. - 1207 A.D.).[3] How the Prince Rubhan fell in love with the fairy Princess Shahpari of Rokam and suffered a lot of troubles to get her is the main theme of this work.

Ganjvi

Muhammad Jan

He is thought to have existed in the middle of eighteenth century. He wrote a booklet, Namaznama. Its

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1. Madhya Yuger Bangla Sahitye Muslim Kabi, op. cit, p. 251.

2. Bangalee-o-Bangla Sahitya, op. cit, p. 527.

3. Bangalee-o-Bangla Sahitya, op. cit., p. 525.

manuscript in Arabic script has been recoverd.[1] He had written it in Arabic script but in Bengali Langu-age. He wrote in the conclusion of this work which means that to write religious matters in Bengali language are in vogue but to write the religious matters in Bengali scripts is sinful act.

Danish

A number of poets with the name of Danish are available in Bengali literature during the medieval period. One Danish Qazi has been reffered to Gul-e-Baqauli by Muhammad Muqim. He is thought to have existed in the middle of eighteenth century in Chittagong.[2] One Muhammad Danish has translated Sanskrit Panchatantra into Bengali from its Perssian translation. He has named this work Ynan-Bashanta Bani.[3]

Another Muhammad Danish has written a number of works entitled- Chahar Darvish, Hatim Tai, Golar Sanuar and Nu-ul-Imam. The poet belonged to Shibpur-Howrah in the last part of eighteenth century.[4]

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1. Muhammad Enamul Haque Rachanavali, op. cit.,p. 349.
2. Madhya Yuger Bangla Sahitye Muslim Kabi, op. cit., p. 260.
3. Ibid,
4. Bangalee-o-Bangla Sahitya, op. cit., p. 897.

Rahimunnesa

The medieval period of Bengali literature was mainly dominated by male poets. A few female poets were found at that period. Rahimunnisa was one of them whose identily has recently been discovered from a puthi named Padmabati which was written by her husband. Though she was mainly the transcriber of the manuscripts of her husband's work, she also added a portion of her own writing which may be termed as autobiography which amply testifies her poetic talent.

Rahimunnisa's second work on elegy which was based on the sad and premature demise of her husband and two brothers. Her third work was also a mournful poem.

Though her works were very short yet she occupied a commendable position in medieval period because of the unique quality of her works.

She was the only daughter of Shah Abdul Qadir. She was born sometime between 1763-1800 A.D.[1] She was married to Ahmad Ali of Mekhab Gram, under Hat Hazari police station of Chitagong. Ahmad Ali belonged to a very respectable family and was very influencial.

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[1] Manisha Monjusha, vol. I,op.cit.p, 146.

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Muhammad Jiban

The poet, son of Ali Muhammad and resident of Bashkhali of Chittagong, belonged to the last part of eighteenth century.[1] He wrote two poems, at the instruction of Abdul Majid, entitled Kamrup-Kalakam and Banu Hussain-Bahramgore, both are on love theme. The former one has not yet been found and the latter one has been recovered by Abdul Karim Sahitya Bisharad in worn out form. This is a love story involving Bahram, King of Persia and fairy-Queen, Banu Hussain.[2]

Arif

Arif, author of Lalmon-er-Ketchcha, is thought to be the resident of Tajpur village in Dakshin Rar area.[3] He is supposed to have belonged to last part of the eighteenth century. In this wrok Sattya pir has played a major role in controlling the distiny of the hero and heroine. Therefore, it was regarded by some one as Sattya pir-er Pachali.[4]

Balak Faqir

This Chttagonian poet was the disciple of Ali Raza who is believed to have existed between the last part of the

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1. Bangalee-o-Bangla Sahitya, op. cit., p. 528.
2. Madhya Yuger Bangla Sahitye Muslim Kabi, op. cit. p. 254.
3. Ibid, p. 257.
4. Ibid, p. 456.

eighteenth and first part of nineteenth century. It seems the poet is assumed to be contemporary with Ali Raza. His Faidul Muqtadee is written on religious matters. How would a true Muslim behave, what would be his duties and responsibilities from birth to death, have been properly focussed in this work.[1]

Nasir

There are two persons with the same name one Sayyid Muhammad Nasir and the other Sayyid Nasir. The former one has written one puthi named 'Benazeer-Badre-e-Muneer, dealing with love affairs between Prince Benazeer and princess Badre-Muneer.

The latter Sayyid Nasir has written a work entitled 'Siraj Sabil which has dealt with matters related to the creator and its creations. He belonged to Ameerabad of Satkania in Chittagong either in the last part of eighteenth or in the first part of nineteenth century.[2]

According to Ahmad Sharif the two Nasirs is are same person.[3]

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1. Madhya Yuger Bangla Sahitye Muslim Kabi, op. cit, p. 256.
2. Bangalee-o-Bangla Sahitya, op. cit., p. 645.
3. Ibid.

Muhammad Rafiuddin

Muhammad Rafiuddin, son of Ashraf was born at Naranga village in Kumilla district. The poet is said to have belonged to last part of seventeenth century and first part of eighteenth century.[1] He composed the poems named Zebul Mulk Shamarokh and the same thing was composed by Muhammad Akbar of Tripura who belonged to seventeenth century. But Rafiuddin's language is more refined and enlightened than that of Sayyid Muhammad Akbar.[2]

The work is based on a wonderful tale which tells about how zebulmuluk passed through fire and water for the sake of his fiancee, Shamarokh and ultimately succeeded in uniting with her.

Th ough eighteenth century was a period of political termoil, even then number of poets and poetic works were numerous in this century. Bangla was the vernacular language of both the Muslims and Hindus. They depicted their religion and culture through vernacular language as the common men easily grasp. Most of the works give religious and moral teachings and some are historical and romantic.

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[1] Muhammad Enamul Haqul Rachanavali, op. cit., p. 371.

[2] Ibid.

CONCLUSION

Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.), at his last sermon addressed to a mammoth gathering at Arafat, asked the audience present there to propagate his message to those who did not happen to be present there. So many learned scholars, Muhadditheen and Mufassireen spread out far and wide with the message of Islam. Some of them came to Bengal with the traders who had long been acquainted with the land. They found the land to be inhabited by the idolators, so they felt urgency to spread the message of Tawhid among them. Initially they were confronted with many hardships, because they were not in the good books of the Hindu rulers. When the Muslim rules were established in Bengal by Ikhtiyar ud-Din they felt great advantages because the Muslim rulers patronized them liberally.

The first Quranic injunction which was revealed to the Prophet was اقرأ باسم ربك الذى خلق [1] which means, 'read in the name of thy Lord Allah who created thee you. this verse clearly exposes what a great importance Islam attaches to the acquisition of knowledge. Each and every Mulism ruler very much belived in this injunction. So they founded many

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1. Quran, Al Khalaq, LXXXXVI, 1.

mosques, madrasahs, maktabs and other academic institutions, the relics of which are still available in many places. The traditon of establishing religious and academic institutions continued even beyond the end of Muslim rule in Bengal. Apart from this, the Muslims have contributed a lot in the *creation of many immortal literatures. Arabic and Persian* languages were in vogue but Persion was more prevalent, as compared to Arabic, because of the following factors. The majority of the Muslim rulers of Bengal were either Persian or Turkish and naturally they were more in favour of this language. From the very beginning they adopted it as official language. The Muslim intelligentia also undertook literary activities more in Persian. As far as origin of the language is concerned, Persian and modern Indo-Aryan languages belong to the common sub branch of the great Indo-European family of languages. Apart from the Muslims, this soft language was equally dear to the Hindus. The Muslim as well as Hindu writers had profusely used Persian words in their Bengali literature. In this way Bengali literature was greatly enriched.

On the other hand Arabic belonged to a completely different family of languages. It is semite in origin.

Arabic was never spoken in Bengal[1] and produced a few authors of eminence. Despite of all these difficulties, Arabic was a dignified language to the Muslims as it is the language of the Quaran and the Hadith. This was the reason that this language was mainly confined to religious circle. Because of the afore mentioned factors there was a profusion of Persian works as compared to Arabic in the medieval Muslim period of Bengal.

The Muslim scholars also took to writing in Bengali and produced a lot of valuable works both religious and romantic with an aim to counteracting the deleterious effects of Hindu literature over the common Muslim masses and helping the same for better appreciation of the complex religious matters.

So it can be safely concluded that the Bengal's contribution to Islmaic Studies is not a mere conjecture but is an established fact.

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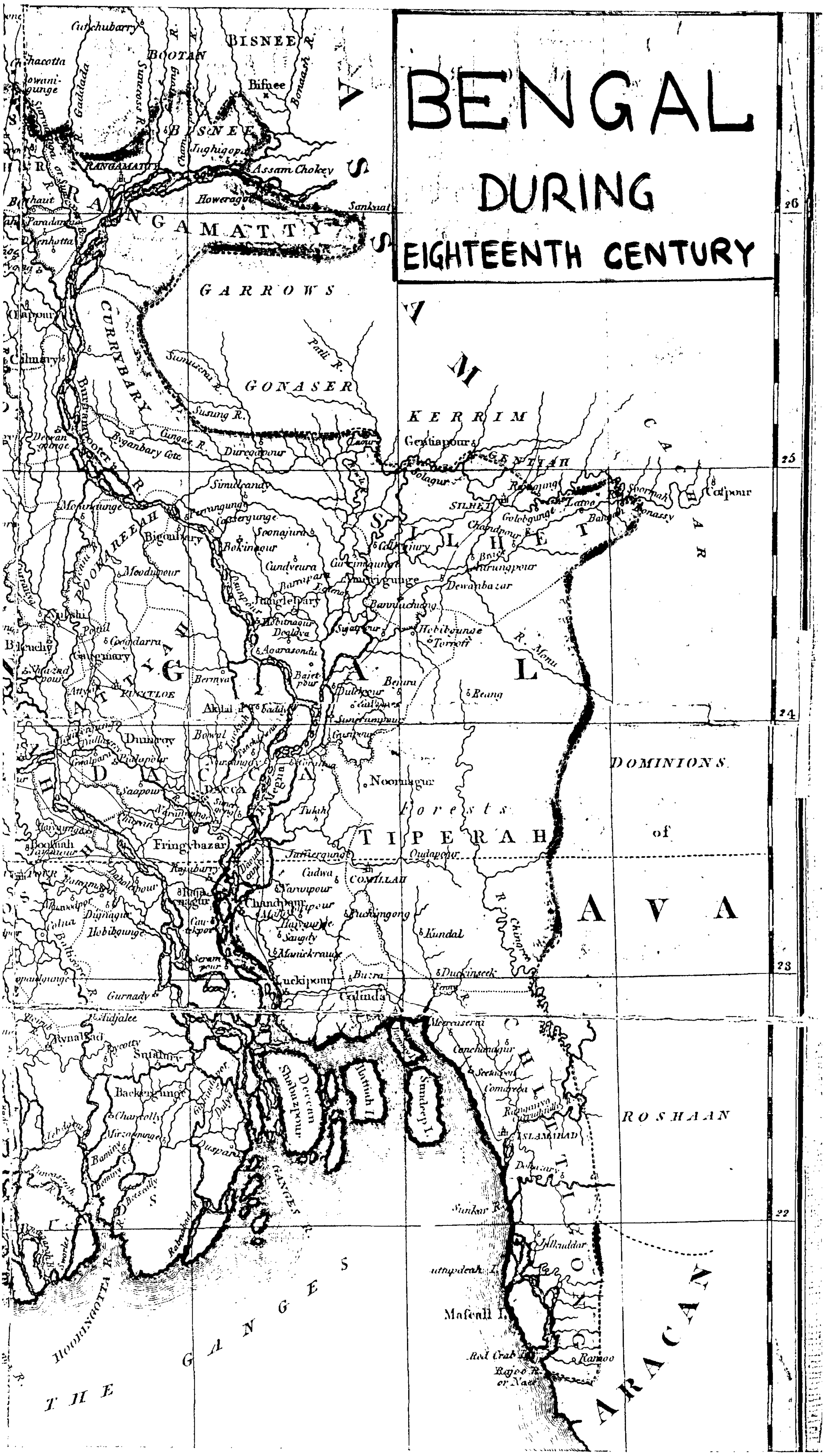
[1] Chinmoy Dutt, Contribution of Bengal to Arabic and Persian Literature in the Turko-Afghan Period (A.D. 1203-1538), Reprinted from the Iran Society Silver Jubilee Souvenir, Calcutta, n.d., p. 83.

BENGAL DURING EIGHTEENTH CENTURY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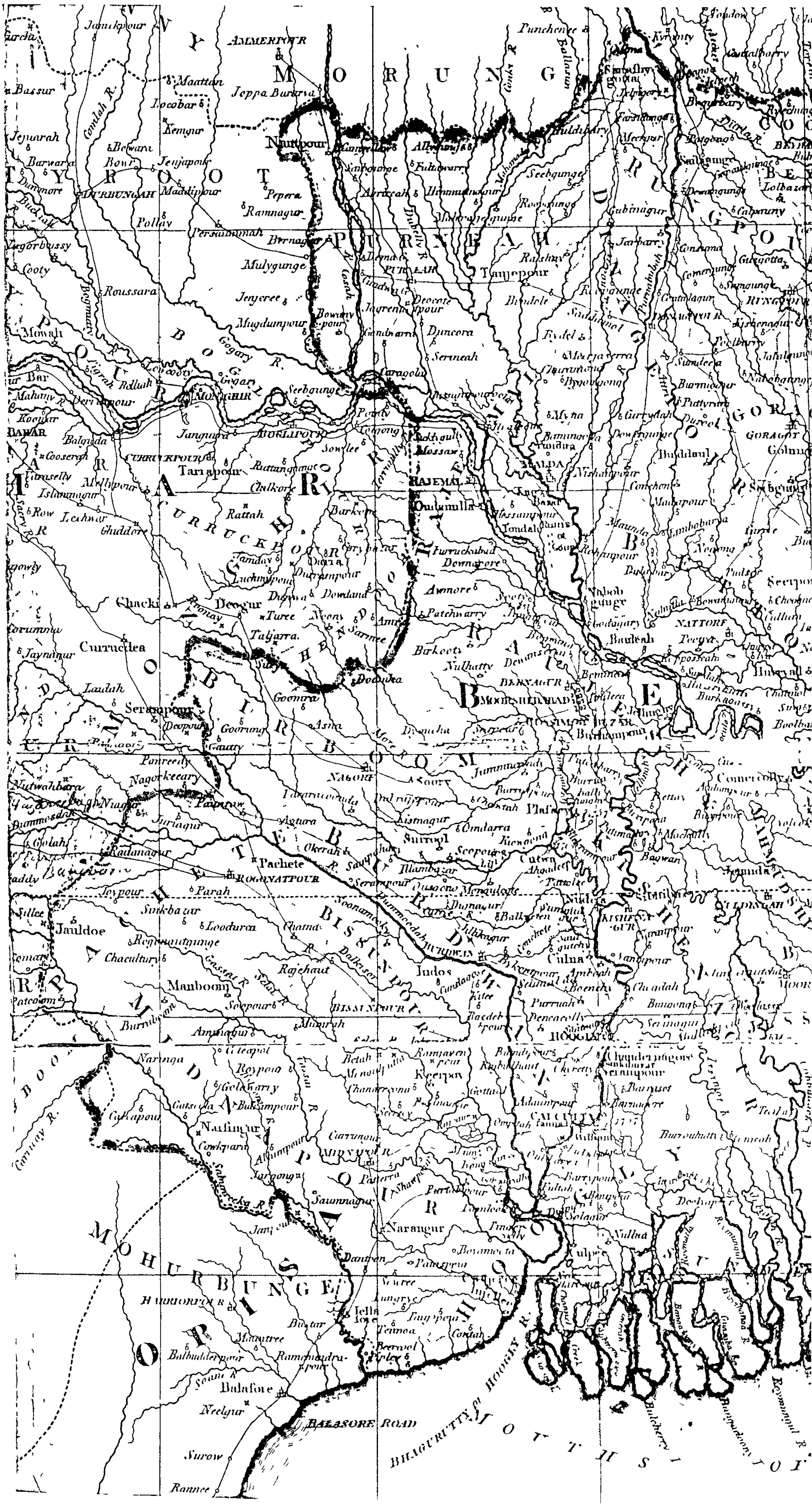

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